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ABSTRACT

This report details the First Steps Developmental Continua project in a West Australian primary school with a highly culturally diverse student population to (1) ascertain whether recently-established early childhood education developmental guidelines and the corresponding curriculum are useful to map the development of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners, (2) identify criteria that may be inappropriate or require modification, (3) examine the effectiveness of the learning and teaching strategies suggested in each phase of the curriculum, and (4) make recommendations for modifications to the guidelines, criteria, and teaching strategies. The project involved 18 classes; 10 were part of an intensive language center and 8 were mainstream classes. The first section of the report gives an overview of the project and its methodology. The second describes the use of the guidelines to map writing and spelling development, and includes two case studies. The third section discusses issues in the support of linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom, and the fourth section focuses on supporting language and literacy development in ESL learners. The final section contains a preliminary report of findings. Forms used for recording data in the study are appended. (MSE)

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ED 418 591

SUPPORTING LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY THROUGH FIRST STEPS

The Highgate Project

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Education Department of Western Australia

First Steps

SUPPORTING LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY THROUGH FIRST STEPS

THE HIGHGATE PROJECT

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SECTION I

Report on the First Steps Project at Highgate Primary School

- Introduction
- Method of Investigation
- Findings
- Discussion and Recommendations
- Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

First Steps has been developed over five years in Western Australia as a way of linking assessment with teaching and learning. Continua have been developed for oral language, reading, writing and spelling as a way of helping teachers to map children's development and make decisions about teaching practice on the basis of their observations and interaction, within a 'whole-language' approach to learning. Within this framework, it is recognised that language learning is holistic and develops in relation to the context in which it is used.

The Continua make explicit some of the indicators or descriptors of behaviour that help teachers identify how learners are constructing and communicating meaning through English. Indicators which seem to occur together have been placed into a 'phase', so that each Continuum is made up of a number of 'phases'. Key indicators are typical of a particular phase of development. They signal the development of a significant skill or understanding which can then be consolidated and extended through the selection of appropriate learning experiences and teaching strategies outlined in the First Steps material.

It is recognised that each learner will exhibit a unique developmental pathway which reflects his or her social, cultural and educational experiences. Thus, children may exhibit indicators from a range of phases at any one time and will not progress through phases in a neat and well sequenced manner. Individuals may move back and forward between phases, they may stay in one phase for some time, move rapidly through others and omit some altogether. There will be differences across modes of language and across groups of learners. The indicators are not designed to provide evaluative criteria through which every child is expected to progress in sequential order. They reflect a developmental view of teaching and learning and are clearly related to the contexts in which learning takes place.

First Steps and English as a Second Language

The development of the Continua, Indicators and Strategies was based on findings from research into the development of oracy and literacy of English-speaking children. Given that many teachers in Western Australia work with children for whom English is a second language, it is important to consider the extent to which the First Steps materials are appropriate and useful as a means of evaluating and supporting the development of ESL learners.

Although research suggests that some of the processes involved in first and second language development in early childhood are similar, there are also significant differences. These differences are thought to influence both the rate and route of development of English and include:

- the age and personality of the learner;
- the cognitive development of the learner and motivation for learning the second language;
- the social and cultural context in which the learner is developing his or her understanding of how language and literacy is constructed;
- the oral and written conventions of the learner's first language and his or her level of oracy and literacy;
- individual learning styles and needs; and
- the classroom context in which learning is taking place. This includes teaching practices, attitudes and values, the curriculum, resources and evaluation strategies.

In addition to the above, children who are developing English as a second language are not a homogeneous group of learners. They come from a wide range of cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds. Each child brings his or her own understanding of how literacy is 'done' and what 'counts' as literacy to his or her developing understanding of English. Learners who are literate in their first language may have a sophisticated understanding of the nature and function of print and have developed a number of writing and spelling strategies appropriate to their first language.

The recognition of these differences between first and second language development led to a project to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the First Steps materials for children who are learning English as a second language.

Purpose of the Project

In order to determine the appropriateness of the First Steps Developmental Continua to ESL learners, and to enable modification where appropriate, this study has four main aims:

- To ascertain whether the First Steps Developmental Continua are useful as a means of mapping the development of a range of ESL learners.
- To identify those indicators which may be inappropriate or require modification.
- To examine the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies suggested in each phase of the First Steps Developmental Continua.
- To make recommendations for modifications to the Developmental Continua, Key Indicators and Teaching Strategies.

Project Context

As a result of extensive discussions with the principal and staff, Highgate Primary School was chosen as the site of the research. Highgate Primary School is an inner city school located approximately three kilometres north of central Perth city. The school was established in 1895 and has a population of around 435 children from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. There are approximately 26 cultural backgrounds represented in the school, with a high percentage of Vietnamese, Khmer and Chinese children. Learners who have recently arrived in Australia, refugees and Australian-born children who come from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB), attend the Intensive Language Centre (ILC) for up to four terms before entering mainstream schools.

At the time of the project, there were 110 children in the Intensive Language Centre. The rest of the children attend the mainstream school which has a high percentage of ESL learners, as many children in the ILC choose to continue their education at Highgate Primary. The ILC classes range from Year 1 to Year 7 and the primary school ranges from Pre-language, Preprimary to Year 7.

Highgate Primary School and Intensive Language Centre was selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- A range of language and cultural backgrounds was represented within the school.
- A range of ages and abilities was represented within the school.
- A number of learners were literate in their home language and these languages and literacy skills formed part of the teaching program.
- The majority of staff based their teaching on a 'whole-language' approach to learning, which was modified according to the needs of individual learners.
- Both Intensive Language Centre staff and the 'mainstream' staff were willing to trial the First Steps materials over a period of two years.
- The school was working towards the implementation of the Education Department's Social Justice Policy (1991).

Classes Involved

Altogether there were 18 participating classes, 10 were part of the Intensive Language Centre, and eight were part of the mainstream school. During the project, four Ethnic Aides worked in the Intensive Language Centre. The Ethnic Aides spoke a range of Asian languages which included Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer and Thai. Discussions were held with parents through formal meetings in which interpreters were available and informal meetings with staff and children.

Project Funding

The project was jointly funded by the First Steps Project, the English as a Second Language Unit (Education Department of WA) and Highgate Primary School, over a period of two years, commencing in January 1991.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Data Collection

The investigation was based on action research in which teachers discussed and trialed the First Steps materials, through reflection and analysis of teaching and learning. Data collection was based on the first three previously identified purposes of the study which were:

> **To ascertain whether the First Steps Developmental Continua are a useful means of mapping the development of a range of ESL learners**

To achieve the first purpose of the project, teachers attended ten professional development days over two years to become familiar with the Developmental Continua. They were asked to map the ESL learners' progress on the Continua to ascertain the extent to which the learners' developmental profile reflected the First Steps Developmental Continua.

> **To identify those indicators which may be inappropriate or require modification.**

To achieve the second purpose of the project, teachers were asked to comment on the Indicators and identify those they felt were inappropriate or needed modification. They were then asked to elaborate on their findings, give specific examples and make recommendations for changes and additions.

> **To examine the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies suggested in each phase of the First Steps Developmental Continua.**

To achieve the third purpose of the project, teachers were asked to trial the First Steps teaching strategies. They were asked to identify those which seemed to be inappropriate or in need of modification. In addition to this, they were asked to identify key strategies which seemed to be particularly effective for second language learners.

Throughout the project, teachers met formally at regular intervals with the project leader to discuss the relationship between the children's development and the Developmental Continua and the effectiveness of the strategies. Ongoing, informal discussions were part of weekly interactions among the teaching staff. Discussion and reflection was based on:

- analysis of children's draft writing samples;
- development of case studies over two years;
- observation and demonstration of particular strategies by the project leader and Focus Teacher, who worked with teachers in the classroom context;
- definitions and interpretations of key and other indicators; and
- analysis of strategies used with learners of different ages and levels of development in English and their home languages.

Teachers who had used the First Steps Oral Language Developmental Continuum had found it to be too general to map the development of ESL learners. Therefore, it was decided to focus on the Writing and Spelling Developmental Continua to ensure in-depth trialing and analysis. This document reports on the findings related to the Writing and Spelling Developmental Continua.

TIMELINE

1990

December	Negotiations with Highgate Primary School and Intensive Language Centre Coordinator and Staff.

1991

January	Project Coordinator appointed. Discussions with staff about nature of the project.
February	Two days PD on the Spelling Development Continua. Information to parents about project Project coordinator working alongside teachers implementing First Steps strategies. The collection of a range of draft writing samples began.
May	Placement of children on Spelling Developmental Continuum. Initial discussion of phases based on spelling samples. Discussion of spelling strategies. Two days PD on the Writing Developmental Continuum.
June	First Steps Concept Keyboard Professional Development. Ongoing discussion of spelling samples.
July	First Steps Focus Teacher appointed part-time.
August	Initial discussion of Writing Continuum and Strategies. Two days PD on the Oral Language Development Continuum.
November	Placement and discussion of children on Writing Continuum.
December	Review of Spelling and Writing Continua Review of Key Indicators and Strategies for Spelling and Writing.

1992

February	Two days PD on the Reading Development Continuum. First Steps Focus Teacher takes up full-time position.
March	Review of Continua, Key Indicators and Strategies for Spelling and Writing.
June	Detailed review of appropriateness of writing strategies. Focus Teacher and project leader continue to work alongside project teachers.
July	First Steps 'Linking day' to select curriculum focus area for 1993. Decision to use First Steps Frameworks for developing genre. Discussion of ongoing reports on the Writing and Spelling Continua, Indicators and Strategies.
August	Identification of strategies to ensure effective transition from Intensive Language Centre to mainstream classes (Preprimary to Year 1, and Year 3 to Year 4).
September	Discussion of ongoing reports on Writing and Spelling Continua, Indicators and Strategies.
October	Updating of Spelling and Writing Continua.
November	Discussion of School Development Plan in relation to First Steps Project.
December	Final formal meeting with staff to discuss process and outcomes of project. All data collected and collated to be used as the basis for the Highgate Primary School and Intensive Language Centre Project Report.

FINDINGS

General Findings

Although the danger of oversimplification is always present when reporting on a complex phenomenon, after reflection on the two-year involvement in the project, the teaching staff felt the following general conclusions could be reached:

- On the whole, the First Steps materials were relevant and useful in monitoring and supporting the development of ESL learners in spelling and writing, when used in conjunction with knowledge of the cultural and linguistic background of the learner and the process of learning English as a second language.

- The development of young ESL learners, who were not literate in their first language was reflected in the Continua to a greater extent than older learners. That is, the spelling and writing behaviours of younger learners could be identified in particular phases and to some extent mirrored the development of native English speakers.

- Learners used a variety of strategies to help them write but self-generated as opposed to copied writing seemed to reflect the ESL learners' oral competence in English. Those areas which seemed to take time to develop were related to syntactical and morphological aspects of English. Forms and functions of English did not develop simultaneously and these need to be recognised and recorded separately.

- The Indicators were useful as a means of identifying current levels of understanding in relation to skills, concepts and attitudes. However, it was important to recognise that linguistic behaviours did not necessarily represent cognitive understanding, especially in relation to the early stages of English language development.

- With one or two exceptions, the strategies suggested in First Steps were successful in supporting second language development, and the strategies the learners found most successful often reflected their cultural and linguistic background.

- New ESL learners needed time to 'tune in' and become familiar with the classroom context before being placed on the continuum. It was difficult to place new arrivals in the early stages of ESL development on the Continua as there was little evidence on which to make an informed judgment.

- Some ESL learners who were becoming literate in their first language had a wealth of knowledge and understanding about writing practices. In alphabetically-based languages, there was some evidence to suggest that they transferred this to English, e.g. punctuation, orientation, letter formation. However, it was not just the surface features that transferred. Some ESL learners also seemed to transfer a deeper understanding of how language works to their writing.

- Evidence of the ESL learners' understanding of their first language should be added to their profile as recognition of their developing competence in a language other than English. This could be developed as part of an overall language profile for each learner and mapped through evidence from observations, oral recordings, samples of work and anecdotal notes.

- Code *mixing* appeared to be an important strategy in the ESL learner's attempts to convey meaning. Learners borrow words, phrases or sentences from their first language to help clarify the meaning. This is seen as a creative process, in which learners draw on their language repertoire to ensure effective communication. This seemed to occur in all phases of development and should be added to the learner's profile. Evidence also suggested that some learners could *switch* languages according to the purpose and audience.

- The process of action research was a powerful and supportive way of examining and evaluating teaching practice in relation to the First Steps materials.

Specific Findings

The first aim of the project was to ascertain whether the First Steps Developmental Continua are a useful means of mapping the development of ESL learners.

Writing Developmental Continuum

- Evidence suggested that the writing development of *young* ESL learners could be monitored through the Writing Developmental Continuum. Over the two-year period, teaching staff were able to place *young* ESL learners in particular phases of the Writing Developmental Continuum.

- In many cases, *young* ESL learners appeared to progress through the phases of development identified in the First Steps Writing Developmental Continuum. This was characterised by consolidation of particular behaviours over a long period followed by 'spurts' and 'backslides' as new forms developed. This is a dynamic and complex process in which learners are internalising and consolidating new information.

- In contrast to this, many older learners in the early stages of the development of English demonstrated indicators from a range of phases and could not easily be placed in a particular writing phase.

- Older ESL learners who were literate in their first language tended not to display key indicators from the early phases of the Writing Continuum. They already had skills and understandings of concepts of literacy and used these to establish new conventions of English.

- When older ESL learners who could not write in their first language began to write in English it was found that they either omitted, or progressed through, the initial writing behaviours much more rapidly than younger learners. They were cognitively more advanced and most of these behaviours were inappropriate.

Spelling Developmental Continuum

- Teaching staff found it difficult to place some ESL learners on the Spelling Continuum. Language background, learning style, age and literacy in the learner's home language(s) influenced the development of spelling in a number of ways, making placement problematic.

- Older children who were literate in their home language(s) did not progress through each phase of development. They demonstrated indicators from several phases or demonstrated indicators from the later phases. Some indicators were not evident at any level of development and some learners never demonstrated all the indicators from a particular phase. Therefore, it was inappropriate to try to locate them within a particular phase.

- For young ESL learners and learners in the stages of learning English as a second language, the Semi-Phonetic and Phonetic Phases often reflected transfer from their home language(s). The phonological system from their first language influenced their pronunciation and therefore their spelling. In these phases some learners used visual clues, memory and environmental print to help spelling, rather than phonological and graphophonic awareness.

- Some learners who were literate in a language based on an ideographic system (e.g. Mandarin) were not accustomed to sound-symbol relationships. They tended to use visual rather than graphophonic strategies to support their spelling development.

The second aim of the project was to identify those indicators which may be appropriate or need extending or modifying.

Writing Development - Key Indicators

- It was observed that some young ESL learners tended to display the same developmental indicators as native English speakers at the same developmental level.

- For some ESL learners, specific aspects of writing seemed to develop over a long time; thus indicators from a particular phase were evident throughout several phases. For example, in language a repetition of particular structures and the use of patterns.

- Older learners in the early stages of writing development did not display many of the behaviours in earlier phases. These were cognitively inappropriate.

- Some ESL learners continued to develop particular semantic and grammatical aspects of writing throughout all phases of development, for example, subject-verb, tense and noun-pronoun agreement.

- Some learners showed evidence of transfer from their home language(s), for example, in punctuation and grammatical constructions.

- Some ESL learners demonstrated competence in particular indicators in their home language. For example, some learners were able to convey complex meanings through writing in languages other than English.

- Some ESL learners were able to convey complex meanings in English using relatively simple forms. Thus it is important to record what learners are doing with language (functions) as well as how they are constructing the meaning (forms).

Spelling Development - Key Indicators

- For some ESL learners, indicators from different phases were evident throughout their development. For example, some learners used copying as a key spelling strategy throughout the early stages.

- For some ESL learners, phonological differences between their first and second language were reflected in their speech and their spelling. Sounds that appeared to be difficult for learners to reproduce made phonetic approximations difficult.

- Initially, some ESL learners appeared to have difficulty distinguishing between sounds, which resulted in some letters or letter clusters being omitted. Thus, learners demonstrated indicators from particular phases but had not fully mastered them.

- Some ESL learners seemed to include elements from the spelling system of their first language(s).

- For some ESL learners, experimentation and risk taking was culturally inappropriate and therefore they did not demonstrate these behaviours in any of the phases.

The third aim of the project was to examine the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies suggested in each phase of the First Steps Developmental Continua.

Writing and Spelling Strategies

Teaching staff reported that they found most of the strategies to be very effective. However, there were some exceptions.

- Some ESL learners were not comfortable with taking risks and experimenting with writing; they preferred to ensure their writing was correct.

- Some ESL learners preferred to consolidate what they knew by using a particular bank of words before attempting to spell unknown words.

- Initially some ESL learners used familiar patterns of language as the basis of their writing, which they consolidated and then extended through a process of reconstruction and addition, rather than experimenting with new structures and forms.

- Because of the time and effort involved in writing, editing needs to be based on an understanding of the demand this will make on the ESL learner. For example, editing can range from a picture to help convey meaning, to focusing on one particular feature so as not to overload and undermine the learner.

- Because of the differences in the phonological systems of some languages, some ESL learners relied on a number of visual strategies rather than phonemic strategies.

- Some ESL learners switched between languages to maintain their 'flow' and create particular meanings.

- Some ESL learners could dictate the text orally with a high degree of competence, through negotiation, clarification and discussion with the teacher.

- Sometimes their written text did not reflect the same degree of competence. In contrast to this, some ESL learners' writing was more precise than their spontaneous oral language as they had time to consider the writing task.

Key Strategies

In addition to the strategies identified in First Steps materials, a number of other strategies have been identified as particularly useful for ESL learners.

- **Build on what learners know.**

  Use evidence from the ESL learner's use of his or her home language(s) to help build a fuller profile of development.

- **Encourage the use of home languages.**

  Encourage ESL learners to write in their home language and share their writing with shared language speakers and English speakers. Translate their texts into English.

- **Provide a variety of support mechanisms.**

  Create a print-rich environment, link visual resources with written forms, provide frameworks to help make particular genres explicit, and use the same patterns in a variety of writing contexts.

- **Focus on particular aspects of texts.**

  Use the context of the ESL learner's writing to focus on forms as well as meaning to help make the structures of English explicit. For example, discuss grammatical patterns, structures (beginning and ends), question forms, conjunctions etc.

- **Discuss differences and similarities between writing systems.**

  This includes sociocultural aspects as well as scripts and conventions of print.

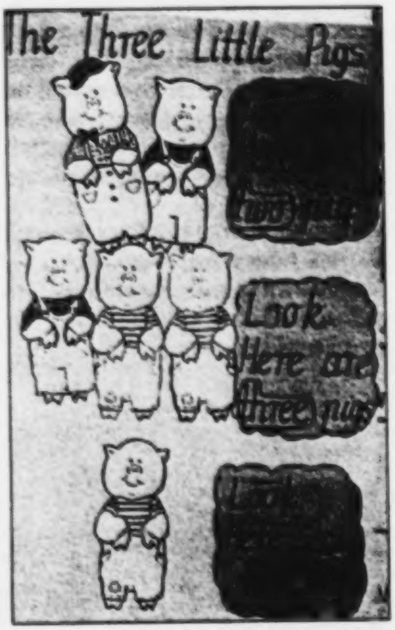
- **Use a range of strategies to support phonological awareness.**

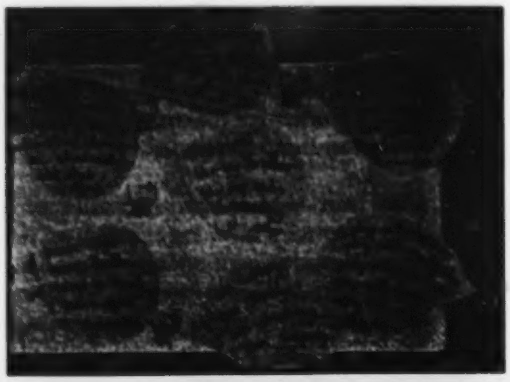
  Rhymes, alliteration, 'I Spy' games, and musical activities all help recognition of and differentiation between sounds.

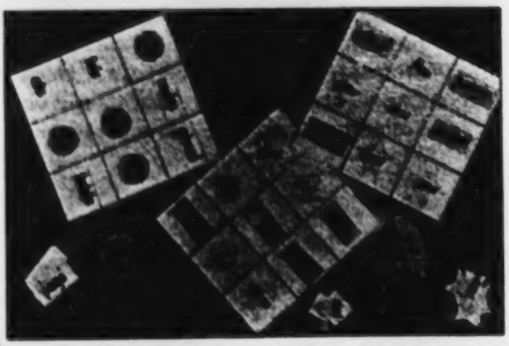
- **Use a variety of cultural and linguistic resources.**

  This enables learners to demonstrate what they know and build on their level of competence, and helps other learners to value diversity.

- **Use resources that are appropriate to the cognitive level of the learner.**







DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Spelling and Writing Developmental Continua

The development of some ESL learners, particularly younger learners, did reflect the phases of development outlined in the Continua. However, for others (particularly in relation to the Spelling Continuum) this was not the case.

Recommendations

- ESL learners are most likely to demonstrate indicators from a range of phases; thus it is not helpful to try to place them in a particular phase. The Continua should be used as a map to observe and document changes in the ESL learners' development.
- Collect information about the ESL learners' first language and cultural background, and use this to supplement the Continua. The profile of each learner needs to reflect his or her overall linguistic repertoire.
- Note particular aspects of development that seem to recur to ensure these are built into the teaching and learning program when the learner is 'ready' to incorporate them into his or her linguistic system.
- Remember that ESL learners tend to use established forms to create new functions before developing new forms. Thus it is important to distinguish between functions the learner is able to produce and forms that encode particular functions, as these do not develop simultaneously.
- Often ESL learners use 'learned chunks' of language to convey meaning, particularly in the early stages of development. As these chunks are broken down into smaller units, the learners' language appears to regress. In fact this is a sign of developing competence in English as these structures are added to the learners' underlying grammatical system and they are producing 'creative' rather than 'memorised' constructions. This should be noted as part of their developing profile.
- The indicators provided a way of identifying the skills, concepts and attitudes that ESL learners are developing. However, the data point to the importance of recognising a number of additional behaviours which add to the ESL learner's profile.
- Profiles should take account of behaviours that are displayed in the ESL learner's home language(s) and which seem to be transferred to English, e.g. punctuation, grammatical structures, time markers etc.
- Profiles should include behaviours that reflect aspects of the learner's home language(s), e.g. evidence of a skill and knowledge of a non-English script.
- Profiles should include behaviours which reflect aspects of the second language process, e.g. use of formulaic structures, code switching, code mixing.
- Phases should be extended and/or reconstituted to reflect those behaviours that ESL learners are displaying at a given time.

Spelling and Writing Strategies

- With a few exceptions, the strategies were found to be appropriate and effective. Reflective classroom practice led to the following recommendations:
- Cultural conventions and individual learning styles must be taken into account when using particular strategies, particularly in relation to risk taking and experimentation. Strategies that ESL learners seem most comfortable with should be encouraged and supported.
- A number of additional teaching strategies can be used where appropriate. These relate to the structural, grammatical and sociocultural aspects of writing within meaningful contexts.

CONCLUSION

Given the complexity of the process of second language development, the diversity of the learners and the limitations of the project, it is clear that any conclusions can only be tentative. The aim of the project was to consider the appropriateness and usefulness of the First Steps writing and spelling materials to ESL learners.

First, it would seem that the Continua can be used as a means of identifying some of the behaviours that ESL learners demonstrate as they become literate in English. However, there are a number of other indicators that need to be recognised and added to the learners' profile in order to give a fuller picture of development. These behaviours are a reflection of the process of second language acquisition, the learners' level of literacy in their first language and their cognitive development.

Second, there is a need to distinguish between the ESL learners' level of understanding and the written representation of that understanding in English. Particularly in the early stages of development, the cognitive level of older ESL learners is often far in advance of their emerging ESL competence. This should be taken into account when evaluating their proficiency in English and planning appropriate learning experiences.

Third, it is not helpful to try to place students in a particular phase. It is more useful to identify those behaviours which seem to be fairly consistent and plan accordingly. It is also important to recognise that ESL learners may also use the same form to convey a number of new functions before trying new forms. Thus, certain forms may be evident for a considerable time, during which the learner is expressing new functions.

Fourth, some strategies may be culturally inappropriate and therefore not applicable. Other strategies may need to be developed which focus on particular grammatical aspects of ESL within a meaningful context. In addition to this, teachers need to find ways of making English 'understandable' through the use of a range of particular strategies.

Fifth, it is important to distinguish between the ESL learners' development in relation to English used *for basic social interaction* and English used for *academic purposes*. These two general forms of language, although not mutually exclusive, are thought to take different lengths of time to develop, with academic language needing more overt support.

Six, this report reflects the findings from one school in relation to the Writing and Spelling First Steps materials. There is a need to consider further First Steps materials in relation to ESL learners from a range of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, at a number of levels and in a variety of learning contexts.

The case studies in Section II have been selected as a means of illustrating some of the above findings.

SECTION II

Using First Steps Continua to Map Writing and Spelling Development

- Introduction
- Case Study One - Cuong
- Case Study Two - Ty
- Mapping ESL Children's Writing and Spelling Development Using the First Steps Developmental Continua
- First Steps Activities and Strategies to Promote Language and Literacy Development

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Highgate Project, teachers collected samples of children's work over one year to develop a profile of each child. The following two case studies have been chosen to illustrate the writing development of Cuong, aged five, and Ty, aged 10. These two children come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and are at different levels of language and literacy development. The case study examples were selected from a large collection of samples taken by the teachers throughout the year. It should be noted that the samples provided in the following case studies represent a partial picture of each child's development. The comments made are a result of discussion with the teacher about the processes used by the child, the classroom context and the completed text. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the children in the case studies.

Although there were some similarities between the writing development of young first and second language learners, teachers identified behaviours which differed from native English speakers. These differences related to:

- the way in which children shaped their practices according to their own cultural background;
- the experience and time children have had to practise using English;
- the age and level of literacy of the children in their home language; and
- how some children may demonstrate proficiency with some indicators at a different time or phase from native English speakers.

CASE STUDY ONE - CUONG

Cuong was five years old when he and his father came to Australia from Vietnam. His mother arrived two years later. Before arriving in Australia, Cuong had not attended school or had access to books and writing materials. Using books, paper and pencils in Australia was a new experience for him. The classroom and the school playground were among the only places where English was practised. Vietnamese was spoken at school with the Ethnic Aide and other Vietnamese children in the classroom and playground.

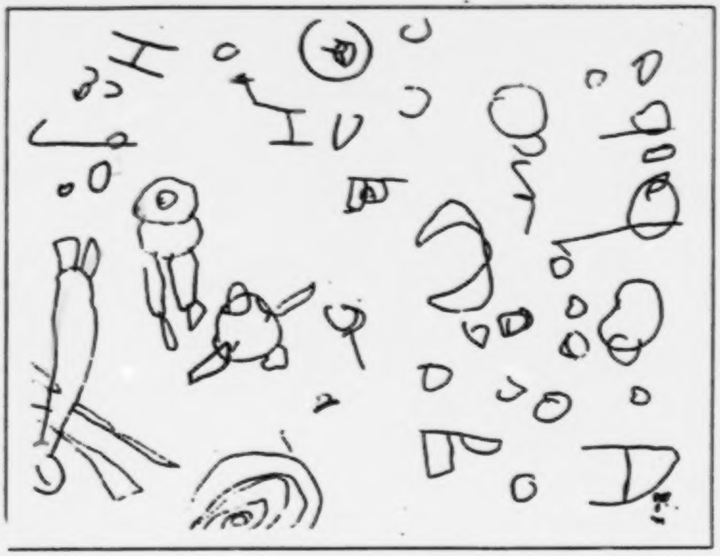
Over the ten months of this study, Cuong moved from the Role Play writing phase to displaying some of the behaviours from the Early Writing phase. On the Spelling Continuum, development moved from the Preliminary phase to displaying behaviours from the Phonetic phase. At the same time, Cuong remained fluent in his first language, while both oral and written English continued to develop.

The classroom was supportive in terms of positive reinforcement from teachers in relation to first and second language development. There was also a print rich environment, a range of resources and a holistic approach to language. The development shown by Cuong was indicative of the culture and teaching strategies used in that particular classroom.

Sample: One **Month:** February

Background

Writing is part of Cuong's daily classroom routine. In this activity, the teacher and Ethnic Aide took the class on a walk around the school. They spoke to the children in English and Vietnamese. The writing activity took place following demonstrations of the writing process by the teacher.



Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Role Play Phase	*Preliminary Phase*
◆ uses letters or approximations of letters to represent written language • draws symbols consisting of straight, curved or intersecting lines that simulate letters • places letters randomly on page	• places letters randomly on the page • uses a combination of pictorial and letter representations • mixes letters, numerals and invented letter shapes ◆ uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language • makes random marks on paper

Comments

The session begins with a sharing time where the children talk about their walk. The teacher discusses the walk with the children and models specific writing strategies, e.g. *What does dog start with? Is that word written anywhere in the room?* The children begin to write a recount of their walk to share with another class.

At this stage Cuong is displaying the behaviours typical of a Role Play writer and Preliminary speller. The Ethnic Aide speaks to him about his writing in his first language while the teacher speaks and praises him in English. He is confident to write on his own and is pleased with his effort. The teacher selects teaching strategies from the writing Role Play phase and spelling Preliminary phase that will assist with further development.

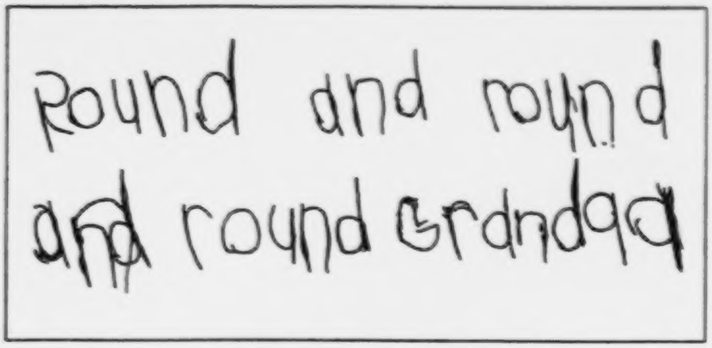
In the following writing samples, only new behaviours displayed by the child have been documented.

For information on the Role Play phase refer pages 2-10 Writing Developmental Continuum.	**For information on the Preliminary Spelling phase refer pages 2-8 Spelling Developmental Continuum.**

Sample: Two **Month:** April

Background

The class has been reading and acting out the 'Round and Round' book from the Storybox Reading Program. They have constructed and manipulated shapes during maths activities, reinforcing the language about the topic and related reading activities. There has been much talking about different shapes in English and Vietnamese.



Round and round and round
and round Grandad

Round and round and round Grandad

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Role Play Phase	*Preliminary Phase*
◆ assigns a message to own symbols • knows some favourite parts of stories, rhymes, jingles or songs ◆ uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language • copies print from environment ◆ shows beginning awareness of directionality, i.e. points to where print begins • copies layout of some text forms, e.g. letters, lists ◆ is aware that print carries a message • thinks own 'writing' can be read by others • enjoys stories and asks for them to be retold or reread • 'writes' spontaneously for self rather than for an audience ◆ understands that writing and drawing are different, e.g. points to text while 'reading'	◆ uses writing like symbols to represent written language • shows beginning awareness of directionality • knows that writing and drawing are different • knows that a word can be written down ◆ is aware that print carries a message • writes own name correctly • reacts to environmental print • is willing to 'have a go' at representing speech in print form • is keen to share written discoveries with others
Experimental Phase	*Semi-Phonetic Phase*
• voices thoughts while writing • writes spontaneously for self or chosen audience	◆ uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print • talks about what has been written or drawn (English and Vietnamese) • recognises and copies words in the environment

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

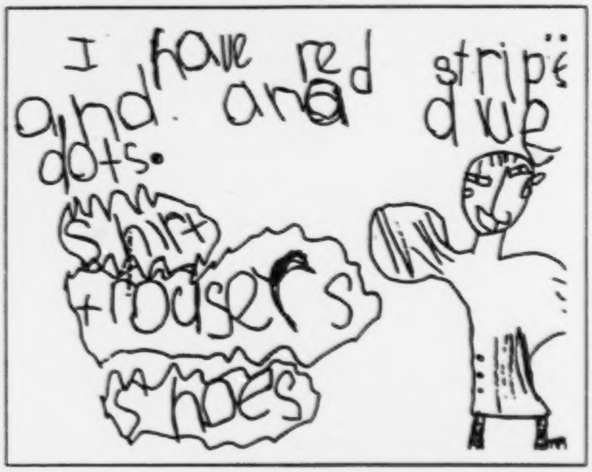
Cuong is confident to embark on the writing task but chose to use *words* copied from the class reading book to complete his writing. When making judgments about children's development, it is important for teachers to note whether or not the children copy or self-generate writing. While copying is a very useful strategy for ESL learners, it provides different information about the child's development from writing which is an original composition. It is important that teachers understand how the writing has been completed. This information will help teachers to make judgments about the behaviours being displayed.

For information on the Role Play and Experimental phases refer pages 2-21 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Preliminary and Semi-Phonetic Spelling phases refer pages 2-18 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Sample: Three **Month:** May

Background

Cuong's competence in English is continuing to develop. He is speaking to the teacher in English and the Ethnic Aide and his friends in Vietnamese. The class has been learning some new vocabulary while reading about clowns.



I have red stripe and blue dots

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Role Play Phase

- reads text from memory or invents meaning
- makes organisational decisions about writing, e.g. *I'll start here so it will fit*
- copies layout of some text forms, e.g. letters, lists
- dictates for adult to write

Experimental Phase

- ◆ uses writing to convey meaning
- writes to communicate messages, direct experiences or feelings
- organises print direction left to right
- organises print direction top to bottom
- distinguishes between numbers and letters
- dictates slowly so teacher can keep up while scribing

Spelling Development

Preliminary Phase

- talks about what has been drawn - written
- may read own writing differently at each reading

Semi-Phonetic Phase

- ◆ uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print
- is confident to experiment with words
- recognises some words in context
- is willing to have a go at representing speech in print form

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

In order to reinforce the concepts of stripes and dots, the children were given a cut-out of a clown and asked to dress the clown with stripes and dots. Cuong dictated his clown's speech bubble and then copied this onto his piece of work. The circled words are copied from words the teacher has written and highlighted during the modelled writing session. Cuong has found this copying strategy successful and feels confident using it. He selects print that is meaningful to him and that he can 'read'.

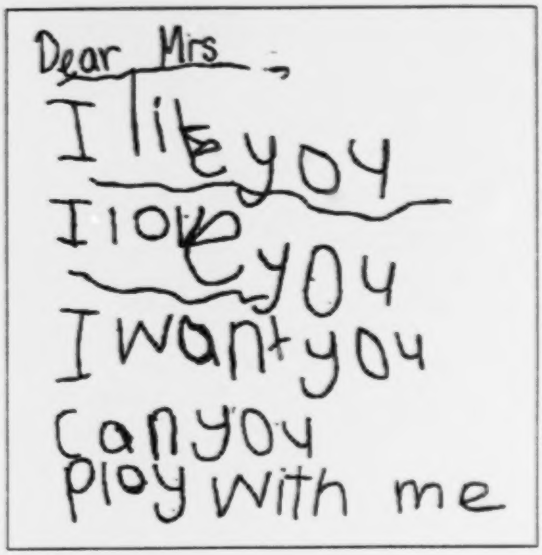
For information on the Role Play and Experimental phases refer pages 2-21 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Preliminary and Semi-Phonetic Spelling phases refer pages 2-18 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Writing and Spelling Development Behaviours Displayed by Cuong

Sample: Four **Month:** June

Background

This activity commenced with the teacher and children revising a letter framework and talking about what they could write if they wrote a letter to someone. The Ethnic Aide translated the teacher's information for the Vietnamese children. The children were then asked to use the framework to write a letter to someone in the school.



Dear Mrs

I like you

I love you

I want you

Canyou

ploy with me

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Role Play Phase

- role play writing message for purpose, e.g. telephone message

Experimental Phase

- ◆ experiments with familiar forms of writing, e.g. lists, letters
- often begins sentence with 'I'
- repeats familiar words when writing, e.g. cat, cat, cat
- generates writing by repeating the same beginning patterns, e.g. 'I like cats, I like dogs, I like birds ...'
- recognises some words and letters in context
- ◆ realises that print contains a constant message
- tells others what has been written
- asks others what has been written
- ◆ uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print

Spelling Development

Preliminary Phase

- repeats some known alphabet symbols

Semi-Phonetic Phase

- uses a small banks of known sight words correctly
- recognises some sound-symbol relationships in context, e.g. points to ship and says 'sh' or recognises first letter of name
- recognises some words in context, e.g. 'That word says *dog*'
- is confident to experiment with words
- begins to use some simple common letter patterns

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

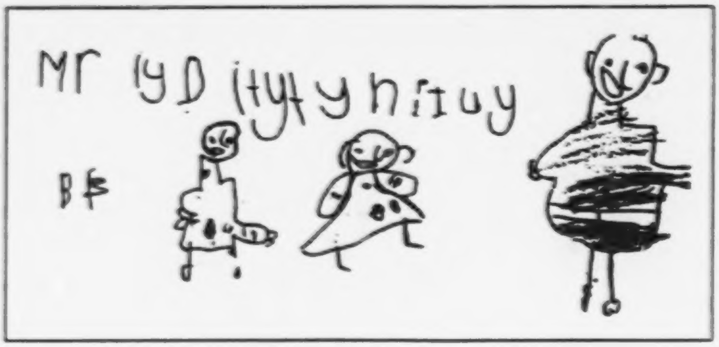
From the writing on the classroom wall charts, Cuong constructed a letter by selecting words with which he was familiar. He is progressing through the Experimental writing and Semi-Phonetic spelling phases as his understanding of the English language develops. He is able to 'read' what he has written, although it may be read slightly differently each time. He is quite happy and confident to write. The classroom teacher continues to demonstrate and select writing and spelling strategies from the above phases to support Cuong's continuing development.

For information on the Role Play and Experimental phases refer pages 2-21 Writing Developmental Continuum.	**For information on Preliminary and Semi-Phonetic Spelling phases refer pages 2-18 Spelling Developmental Continuum.**

Sample: Five **Month:** June

Background

Cuong consolidated the writing he had done on the previous day by producing this sample during a free writing time.


Mr lyD ltytyh h iuy
BF

Mr - How are you today? Can you play with me?
See you. Goodbye

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Role Play Phase	*Semi-Phonetic Phase*
• repeats a few known alphabet symbols frequently using letters from own name	• begins to leave spaces between word-like letter clusters, e.g. I h bn sik.
Experimental Phase	
• leaves a space between word-like clusters of letters	

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

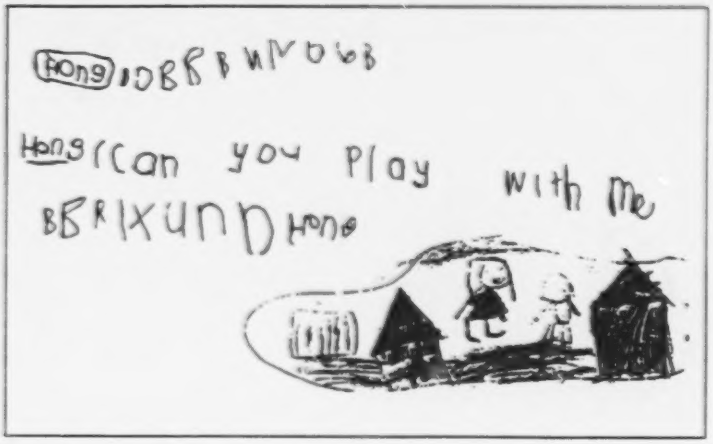
Notice how Cuong moved from copying to free composition over a period of two days. In the process of moving from copying to free composition, Cuong has regressed from writing full words to semi-phonetic representation of some words. His use of illustrations helps to support the meaning of the text. All children when beginning more cognitively demanding tasks will move backwards and forwards along the Continua. Nevertheless, Cuong has the expectation that others will be able to read and understand his writing. He wants to talk about the writing to the teacher and his friends. He tells the Vietnamese Ethnic Aide what he has written.

For information on the Role Play and Experimental phases refer pages 2-21 Writing Developmental Continuum.
For information on Semi-Phonetic Spelling phase refer pages 10-18 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Sample: Six **Month:** July

Background

Cuong demonstrated his developing understanding of written language in this message he wrote to his friend during free writing time.


Hong
Hong Can you Play with me
Hong

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Role Play Phase	*Preliminary Phase*
• experiments with upper and lower case letters. May show a preference for upper case	◆ assigns a message to own symbols
Experimental Phase	*Semi-Phonetic Phase*
• uses upper and lower case letters unconventionally when writing	• uses an initial letter to represent most words in a sentence • uses more letters for longer words

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

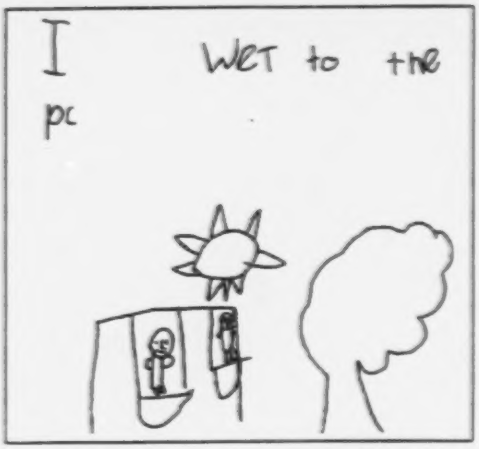
Notice the way Cuong continues to build on the bank of words with which he is familiar. He addresses his message to a particular person, using known words and patterns which are displayed in the learning environment, e.g. *Can you play with me?* In the middle part of the text he demonstrates a growing awareness of word boundaries and spacing. The writing contains a message which he was able to read. He demonstrates an awareness that the messages are often longer than the one he has provided by the addition of a string of letters at the end of his writing.

For information on the Role Play and Experimental phases refer pages 2-21 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Preliminary and Semi-Phonetic Spelling phase refer pages 2-18 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Sample: Seven **Month:** August

Background

Before this writing activity occurred, the children visited the local park. As they walked around they spoke to each other in their own language and in English. When they returned to the classroom, the teacher modelled a recount about visiting the park. Writing strategies were demonstrated and the children then wrote their own recount.



I went to the park

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Experimental Phase

- ◆ relies heavily on the most obvious sounds of a word
- ◆ writes using simplified oral language structures, e.g. 'I brt loles'
- makes no attempt to orient the reader as it is assumed that the writer and reader share the context

Early Phase

- transfers words encountered in talk, or reading, to writing
- often writes in the first person

Spelling Development

Semi-Phonetic Phase

- ◆ represents the most obvious sounds in a word, e.g. KT (kitten); WT (went); BAB (baby); LFT (elephant)
- ◆ represents a whole word with one, two or three letters. Uses mainly consonants, e.g. KGR (kangaroo); BT (bit)
- uses letter names to represent sounds, syllables or words, e.g. AT (eighty)
- uses a small bank of known sight words correctly

Phonetic Phase

- chooses letters on the basis of sound without regard for conventional spelling patterns
- sees self positively as a writer - speller
- confidently makes decisions
- substitutes incorrect letters for those with similar pronunciation

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

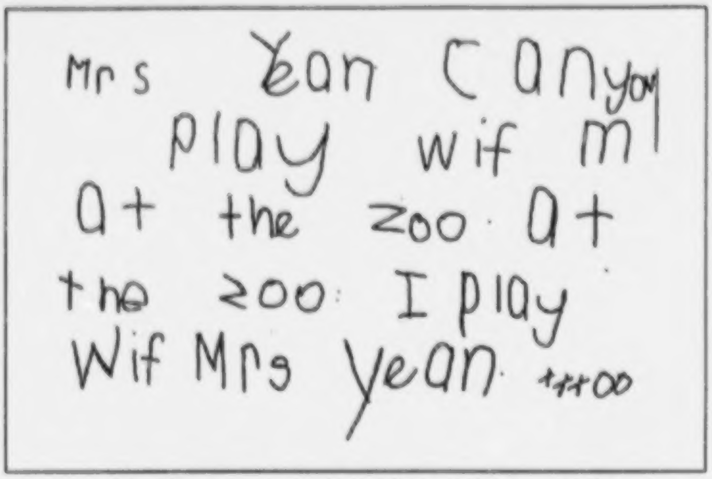
Cuong wrote about the visit to the park. He wrote *I* and copied *wet to the* from the teacher's model. He wrote *'pc'* (park) by himself, verbalising as he did so. In this sample Cuong shows development of his knowledge of word boundaries and spacing. When he finished, he read his message to the teacher and his friends. Notice how the teacher's close observation has allowed him to observe Cuong's spelling and writing behaviours across phases on the Continuum.

For information on the Experimental and Early Writing phases refer pages 12-39 Writing Developmental Continuum.	**For information on Semi-Phonetic and Phonetic Spelling phases refer pages 10-27 Spelling Developmental Continuum.**

Sample: Eight **Month:** September

Background

Prior to visiting the zoo Cuong decided to write a message to the Ethnic Aide. He asked the Ethnic Aide to write her name on a piece of paper. He then composed a letter to her, copying her name from the piece of paper.


Mrs Yan Can you
play wif m
at the zoo. at
the zoo. I play
Wif Mrs yean. ++oo

Mrs Yean. Can you play with me at the zoo. At the zoo I play with Mrs Yean.

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Early Phase

- often writes simple recounts of personal events or observation and comment
- is beginning to use some narrative structure
- writes in a style that resembles oral language
- uses little variety in sentence length
- includes little elaboration, usually simple description
- sometimes uses full stops
- uses capital letters for names
- often writes in the first person

Spelling Development

Phonetic Phase

- chooses letters on the basis of sound without regard for conventional spelling patterns, e.g. kaj (cage), tabl (table), birgla (burglar)
- uses word sources confidently
- usually spells commonly used sight words correctly, e.g. in, has, his, he, my

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

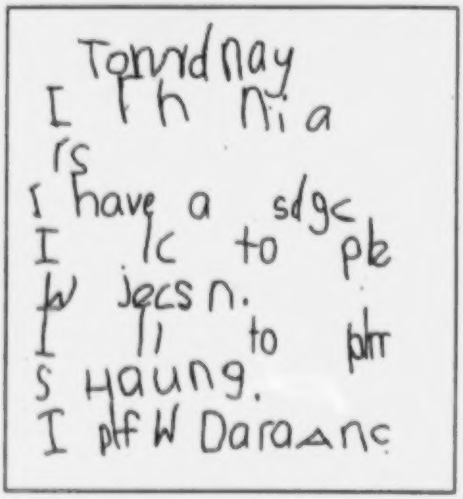
Cuong is continuing to repeat the language pattern '*Can you play with me?*'. He is now spelling *with* - *wif* - experimenting and writing the most obvious sounds he hears. He has moved from copying the spelling to experimenting with spelling, e.g. *wif*. He locates words he knows and wants to use from his environment. When the first sentence was written the class teacher prompted him to write more by asking him what he wanted to do at the zoo. He appears to have responded to the teacher's question by using a known pattern *at the zoo* to introduce the next sentence. The teacher has observed more behaviours from the Early Writing and Phonetic Spelling phases.

For information on the Early Writing phase refer pages 24-39 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Phonetic Spelling phases refer pages 20-27 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Sample: Nine **Month:** October

Background

The teacher modelled the writing task for the class. The children were continually prompted to help at different stages of the writing process as the teacher wanted to demonstrate particular strategies, e.g. identifying initial sounds, locating words. Writing conventions were pointed out to the child as the writing progressed. The children were then encouraged to use their own personal experiences to write an account of the sports carnival.



Torvidnay
I r h ni a
rs
I have a sdgc
I lc to ple
W jecsn.
I li to plr
s Haung.
I plf W Dara∆nc

I ran in a race. I have a sticker. I like to play with Jackson. I like to play Mrs Haung. I play with Dara.

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Early Phase

- ◆ uses a small range of familiar text forms
- uses a partial organisational framework, e.g. simple orientation and story development
- often writes simple recounts of personal events or observation and comment
- ◆ is beginning to use written language structures. Has a sense of sentence, i.e. written complete sentences with or without punctuation
- sometimes uses a capital letter to start a sentence

Spelling Development

Phonetic Phase

- develops particular spellings for certain sounds often using self-formulated rules, e.g. becoz (because), woz (was)
- ◆ chooses letters on the basis of sound, e.g. vampia (vampire), pepl (people)
- still uses some letter name strategies, e.g. awa (away), exellnt (excellent)
- continues to 'have-a-go' - experimenting with spelling words in different ways
- is willing to spell on his/her own

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

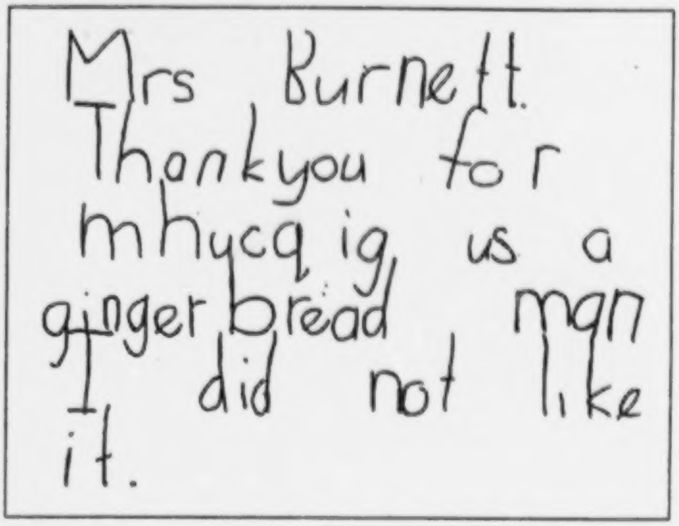
Cuong is now attempting to spell words from the classroom context without copying them. The approximations made by Cuong may be different from those of native English speakers. Cuong most likely uses the sounds of his mother tongue to help him make approximations in English. Notice, however, that he is still relying heavily on the sentence patterns with which he is familiar and feels comfortable, e.g. *lc - like, ple - play*. Cuong is continuing to progress through the Continua, displaying similar behaviour to English-speaking children learning to write for the first time. The teacher's consistent collection of writing samples and observations of writing behaviour enables development to be noted.

For information on the Early Writing phase refer pages 24-39 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Phonetic Spelling phases refer pages 20-27 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Sample: Ten **Month:** November

Background

The class had been reading *The Gingerbread Man* and had made some gingerbread men biscuits with the support teacher. There had been much language exchange taking place during the activity and the children were very excited. After completing the activity, the teacher modelled the writing of a *Thank you* note for the children so they could write a personal thank you note to the teacher.


Mrs Burnett.
Thankyou for
mhycqig us a
gingerbread man
I did not like
it.

Mrs Burnett. Thank you for making us a gingerbread man. I did not like it.

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Early Phase	*Phonetic Phase*

Behaviours displayed in this writing sample have been demonstrated previously.

Comments

In this sample Cuong shows an increasing concern about accuracy and has copied as many words as possible from the teacher's model. However, when he found he was unable to copy *making* from the model he was happy to take a risk and approximate its spelling. This spelling of *making* appears to be quite idiosyncratic and demonstrates a growing confidence with this strategy. Cuong commenced writing by copying the teacher's name and the words *'Thank you'* from the blackboard. He continued writing the word *making* by himself and copied *gingerbread man* from the class book. He then completed his writing by locating words he wanted to use in the environment. He has developed a range of coping strategies for writing unknown words and he is consolidating previously displayed behaviours.

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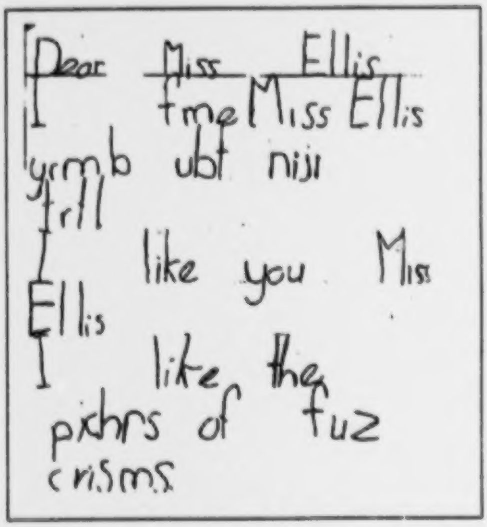
For information on the Early Writing phase refer pages 24-39 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Phonetic Spelling phases refer pages 20-27 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Sample: Eleven **Month:** November

Background

Cuong wrote this message to the librarian following a visit to the school library. The librarian chose Cuong's book to read to the class. When Cuong returned to his classroom he composed this thank you note to give to the librarian.



Dear Miss Ellis
I fme Miss Ellis
yrmb ubt niji
trll
I like you Miss
Ellis
I like the
pxhrs of fuz
crisms

Dear Miss Ellis
I friend me Miss Ellis.
You read my book about Ninja Turtle.
I like you Miss Ellis.
I like the pictures of Father Christmas.

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Experimental Phase - Early Phase	*Semi Phonetic Phase - Phonetic Phase*

Behaviours displayed in this writing sample have been demonstrated previously.

Comments

In this sample Cuong has begun to combine known language patterns with creative constructions to make his own meaning. His use of syntax in the first sentence *I fme* demonstrates some transfer of syntactic structures from first language to his growing understanding of English. It is interesting the way he has represented *you read my book* as a single word structure which may indicate that he is hearing these words as one word. Notice how Cuong is consolidating his understandings of writing by using several strategies simultaneously.

SUMMARY OF CUONG'S WRITING AND SPELLING DEVELOPMENT

During the months February to November Cuong's teacher carefully observed and documented his writing development. Over this time the following indicators of development were demonstrated:

- Like many native English speakers, Cuong's writing development progressed in spurts and plateaus, at times regressing when the cognitive demands of a writing task increased or he became aware of the demands of the English language system.
- Cuong quickly identified particular language patterns which he modified, combined and integrated into his writing as development took place.
- At times Cuong's development progressed without necessarily manifesting every indicator of a particular phase.
- While acquiring an understanding of the English language system Cuong continued speaking and developing his first language.
- The oral language experiences given by the teacher provided Cuong with the content, structure and the contextual knowledge to facilitate his writing.
- Cuong's understanding of the English spelling system gradually moved from copying to invention and towards growing independence.
- There may be some evidence to suggest that as Cuong experimented with the written English language system, at times he relied on first language knowledge.
- Cuong demonstrated a growing awareness of the contextual demands of writing as he became capable of selecting appropriate genres.

CASE STUDY TWO - TY

Ty arrived in Australia from Asia at the age of 10. He had attended school for three years in Thailand and was able to write some words in his first language. He lived on the Thai-Cambodian border with his grandmother and he spoke a combination of Khmer and Thai. Since coming to Australia he has lived with his mother and his Australian stepfather. As a result of the amount of English spoken in the home, Ty developed his oral English quite quickly.

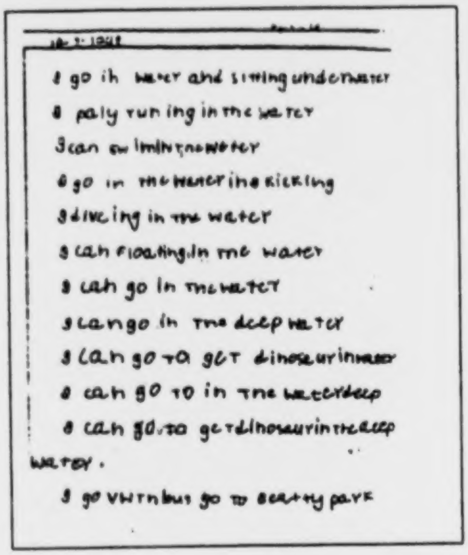
Initially, Ty demonstrates some knowledge of the English writing system, especially his understanding of content and structure of stories. However, his proficiency in spoken English makes it difficult for him to demonstrate his knowledge of these concepts in a written form. In order to support him at this stage, the teacher sometimes took over the scribing of his writing.

Ty quickly moved from the Role Play phase of writing to the Experimental phase without demonstrating several of the behaviours. From that point on he moved between different phases of the Writing and Spelling Continua according to the cognitive demands of the task. Throughout the samples, Ty's willingness to participate in writing provides him with the opportunity to experiment with tense, direct speech, definite and indefinite articles and pronouns. In spelling he moves from copying known words around the room to using phonetic spelling strategies interspersed with some Transitional spelling strategies. The comments at the end of each sample provide more detail about the development shown by Ty.

Sample: One **Month:** February

Background

Ty has been attending school in Australia for two weeks. The class had participated in swimming lessons and on their return to the classroom talked about their experiences with the teacher and Ethnic Aide. Following these discussions the teacher wrote, *What can you do under water?* on the blackboard. She elicited responses from the children and listed these responses. As the teacher listed responses she demonstrated useful writing strategies, e.g. *What does that word start with?* Then the children were asked to write an account of what they did when they went swimming.



[illegible]

I go ih water and sitting underwater
I paly run ing in the water
I can swimin the water
I go in the water ina kicking
I diving in the water
I can floating in the water
I can go in the water
I can go in the deep water
I can go ta get dinosaur in water
I can go to in the water deep
I can go to get dinosaur in the deep
water.
I go with bus go to beatty park

Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development
Role Play Phase

- ◆ assigns a message to own symbols
- ◆ uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language
- ◆ shows beginning awareness of directionality, i.e. points to where print begins
- ◆ is aware that print carries a message
- ◆ understands that writing and drawing are different, e.g. points to text while 'reading'

Experimental Phase

- ◆ reads back own writing
- ◆ writes using simplified oral language structures, e.g. 'I brt loles'
- ◆ realises that print contains a constant message
- ◆ uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print
- ◆ demonstrates one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken word
- ◆ uses writing to convey meaning

Spelling Development
Preliminary Phase

- ◆ assigns a message to own symbols
- ◆ uses writing-like symbols to represent written language
- ◆ uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language
- ◆ assigns a message to own symbols
- ◆ is aware that print carries a message

Semi-Phonetic Phase

- ◆ uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print
- • recognises and copies words in the environment
- • begins to leave spaces between work-like letter clusters, e.g. i h bn sik (I have been sick)
- ◆ relies on most obvious sounds of a word

(Only key behaviours observed for initial placement)

Comments

Given that Ty has only been in Australia for two weeks, he has many strengths on which to build his knowledge of the English language system. Ty demonstrated that he was already aware of a number of strategies that were useful in helping him to write, e.g. *using words that were provided by the teacher.* He is aware that print carries a constant message and that there is a 'right' way to spell. He appears to rely heavily on the familiar language patterns provided by the teacher, e.g. I *can ..., I go ...* However, in his final sentence he appears to have moved from relying on known sentence patterns to attempting the construction of a sentence by himself. In this sentence he also shows that he is aware of the needs of the audience. Although Ty is able to make use of familiar language patterns, he is still struggling to gain control over the syntax of English. Ty's knowledge of written language allows him to proceed quite quickly to the Experimental/Early Writing phase. He has demonstrated some knowledge of the English spelling system. However, he is not yet confident to spell words that are not part of the word bank provided by the teacher.

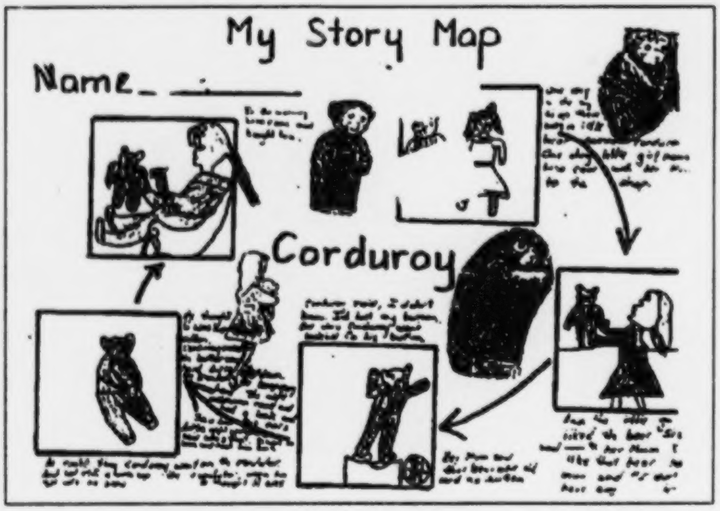
In the following writing samples, only new behaviours displayed by the child have been documented.

For information on Role Play and Experimental Writing phases refer pages 2-21 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Preliminary and Semi-Phonetic Spelling phases refer pages 2-18 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Sample: Two **Month:** March

Background

During the week the class has been reading the Big Book *Corduroy* - written by Fireman D (1976). As the children read and reread the book they were involved in discussions and writing activities related to the story. In this particular activity the children were provided with some pictures of the main events in the story and some blank squares for illustrations. They were then asked to provide the missing illustrations to complete a pictorial retelling of the story, after which they were expected to write supporting text to provide more information about the story.



New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Role Play Phase	*Semi-Phonetic Phase*
• dictates for an adult to write	Teacher has written the message for the child.
Early Writing Phase	
• has difficulty writing because of the complexity of the task, e.g. attending to spelling, handwriting, composing, punctuation simultaneously	

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

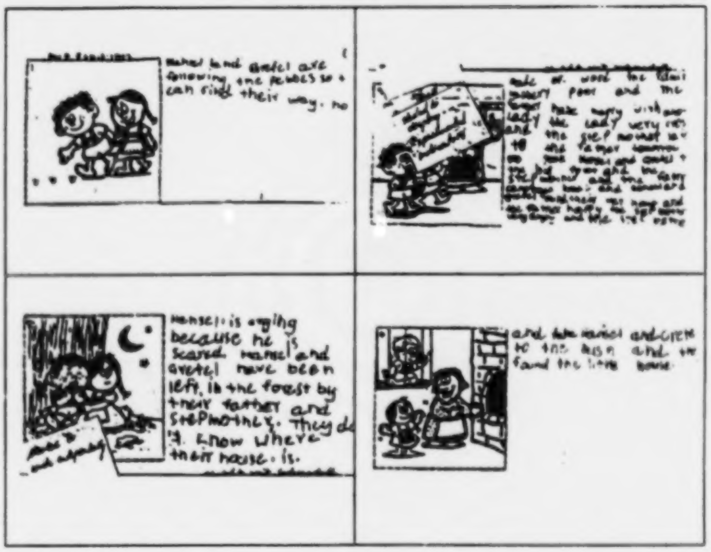
Ty appears to have so much information he wants to write that he is unwilling to complete this amount of writing by himself. To facilitate his story writing the teacher writes the text, which is dictated by Ty. As she participates in this process she helps Ty reshape his language into effective English language sentences while using as many of his personal constructions as possible. At this point Ty demonstrates a strong desire to participate in the oral language part of this activity and shows a good understanding of story structure. However, he appears to be aware that his written language has not reached the level of his English oral language and therefore elects to ask the teacher to scribe for him. Notice the important role the teacher plays in scaffolding Ty's story writing by providing this valuable sequencing activity and scribing for him to enable him to successfully complete his story map.

For information on Early Writing phase refer pages 24-39 Writing Developmental Continuum.

For information on Semi-Phonetic Spelling phase refer pages 10-18 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Writing and Spelling Development Behaviours Displayed by Ty

Sample: Three **Month:** May


Hansel and Gretel are following the pebbles so [illegible] can find their way. ho
[illegible]
Hansel is crying because he is scared. Hansel and Gretel have been left in the forest by their father and stepmother. They d[illegible] know where their house is.
and [illegible] found the little house

Background

The class has been reading, talking about and acting out the fairytale *Hansel and Gretel*. The teacher has given the children illustrations of various parts of the story to help to retell the story. The first two events were completed by the teacher while demonstrating the activity to the children. The children were then given the illustrations and asked to write their own captions. Ty chose to copy the first two captions from the teacher's model and completed the next two independently.

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Early Phase

- ◆ is beginning to use written language structures. Has a sense of sentence, i.e. writes complete sentences with or without punctuation
- sometimes uses full stops
- ◆ writes a range of words that are personally significant
- often writes in first person
- is beginning to use 'book' language, e.g. 'By the fire sat a cat.'
- rewrites known stories in sequence
- is beginning to use some narrative structure
- includes little elaboration, usually simple description
- repeats familiar patterns, e.g. 'In the jungle I saw …'
- transfers words encountered in talk, or reading, to writing
- ◆ attempts to use some punctuation
- uses capital letters for names

Spelling Development

Phonetic Phase

- represents past tense in different ways according to the sounds heard, e.g. stopt (stopped), livd (lived)
- ◆ chooses letters on the basis of sound, e.g. vampia (vampire), pepl (people)
- ◆ sounds out and represents all the essential sounds in a word, e.g. kitn (kitten), wacht (watched), spidr (spider), isgrem (icecream)
- usually spells commonly used sight words correctly, e.g. in, has, his, he my
- still uses some letter name strategies, e.g. awa (away), exellnt (excellent)
- shows increased influence of spelling words encountered in books
- identifies similar sounding words
- is beginning to use simple homonyms/homophones correctly, e.g. their/there, one/won, for/four, park, nail
- uses word sources confidently

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

Ty appears to understand the story and has managed to convey the message of the story in his writing. To do so he uses the knowledge he currently has of English language syntax, punctuation and spelling. There is some evidence of knowledge of English language sentence structures, punctuation and the English spelling system, although he appears to be still developing his understanding of tense. He continues to rely on words from a personal word bank. He is developing the confidence to take risks and spell unknown words. As he integrates all of these strategies he demonstrates progress through the Early Writing and Phonetic Spelling phases. Some of the Semi-Phonetic Spelling behaviours have not been demonstrated because he has moved directly from the Preliminary to the Phonetic phase.

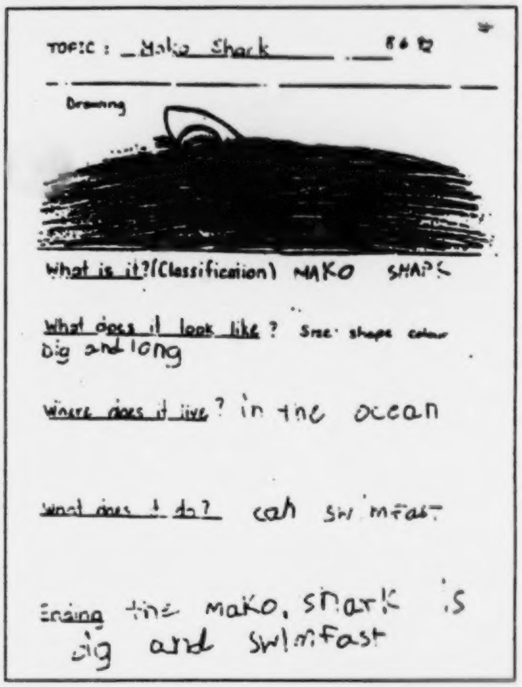
For information on Early Writing phases refer pages 24-39 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Phonetic Spelling phase refer pages 20-27 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Writing and Spelling Development Behaviours Displayed by Ty

Sample: Four **Month:** June

Background

The theme currently being explored in the classroom is *The Sea*. The teacher is preparing to take the class on a visit to Underwater World. The children have been introduced to vocabulary that they need to know to work on the topic and particularly relating to the animals they will be observing during their visit. They were provided with pictures of various sharks. These were discussed together and the teacher then selected one shark picture to demonstrate the report framework to the children. Ty chose a shark picture to talk about and to write his own shark report.



TOPIC : Mako Shark 8 6 92

Drawing

What is it? (Classification) MAKO SHAPS

What does it look like? Size · shape · colour
Dig and long

Where does it live? in the ocean

What does it do? can swimfast

Ending the mako. shark is dig and swimfast

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Early Writing	*Phonetic Phase*
◆ uses a small range of familiar text forms • uses a partial organisational framework, e.g. simple orientation and story development • is beginning to use some informational text structures, e.g. recipes, factual descriptions • attempts to transfer knowledge of text structure to writing, e.g. imitates form of a familiar big book • writes a title which reflects content	• confidently makes decisions

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

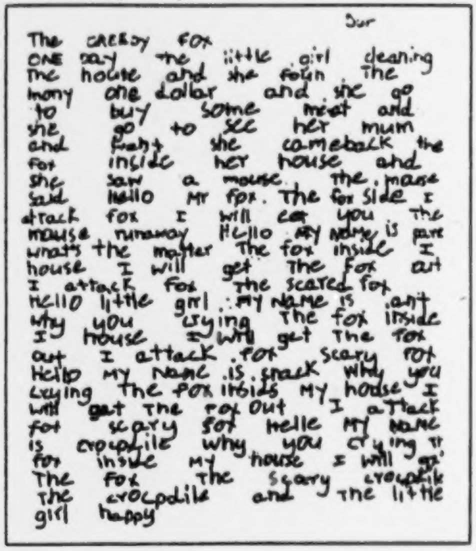
By modelling the activity and providing Ty with the report framework, the teacher has enabled Ty to organise his information about the Mako shark. The teacher reported that Ty understood what was required of him and happily completed the activity, discussing it with his friends. He appears to understand the sentence patterns required to answer questions one and two. However, the third question required a change of sentence pattern which led him to construct the answer *can swimfast*. He may have chosen to use this pattern, because he was familiar with the sentence starter *I can...* He may be writing *swimfast* as one word because it is the way he hears it; on the other hand he may have taken this action because he is not familiar with the simple present *swims*.

For information on Early Writing phase refer pages 24-39 Writing Developmental Continuum.	For information on Phonetic Spelling phase refer pages 20-27 Spelling Developmental Continuum.

Sample: Five **Month:** July

Background

The children have been reading and completing language activities following the reading of the big book *The Greedy Goat*, by Faye Bolton. The teacher asked the children if they knew any other animals that were greedy and had a feature that would scare people. As the suggestions were made they were listed on the blackboard. The teacher then selected one of the animals to model a text innovation of the story, after which the children were asked to select their own animal to write about.



Sur

The GREEDY fox
ONE day the little girl cleaning
the house and she foun the
mony one dollar and she go
to buy some meat and
she go to see her mum
and [illegible] she comeback the
fox inside her house and
she saw a mouse. the mouse
said Hello Mr fox. The fox side I
attack fox I will eat you the
mouse runaway Hello my name is bare
whats the matter The fox inside I
house I will get the fox out
I attack fox the scared fox
Hello little girl my name is ant
why you crying the fox inside
I house I will get the fox
out I attack fox scary fox
Hello my name is snack why you
crying the fox insids my house I
will get the fox out I attack
fox scary fox Hello my name
is crocodile why you crying the
fox inside my house I will go
The fox the scary crocodile
the crocodile and the little
girl happy

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Early Phase

- uses a small range of familiar text forms
- is beginning to use written language structures. Has a sense of sentence, i.e. writes complete sentences with or without punctuation
- writes a range of words that are personally significant
- attempts to use some punctuation
- rereads own writing to maintain word sequence

Spelling Development

Phonetic Phase

- chooses letters on the basis of sound, e.g. vampia (vampire), pepl (people)
- sounds out and represents all the essential sounds in a word, e.g. kitn (kitten), wacht (watched), spidr (spider), isgrem (icecream)
- uses some known patterns in words, e.g. mathursday (mothers' day), nght (night)
- confuses short vowel sounds, e.g. pell (pill)

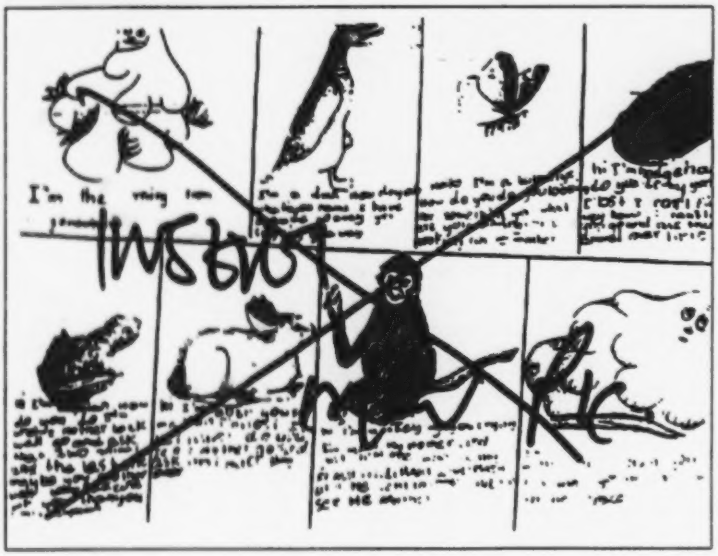
(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

Ty has made good use of the model provided by the story and the teacher and demonstrates a sense of the recurring pattern of the story. He appears to understand the way the story pattern worked. However, the complexity of the task has made it difficult for him to convey the sequential introduction of the characters in the story. In trying to construct his retell he also had some difficulty in making it clear which characters were talking at different times in the story. He has developed a strong sense of story structure and in an effort to convey his message struggles with some of the mechanics of writing it. Ty is using a combination of known words and patterns along with personal constructions of sentence patterns and words when there are no models available to him. He is using the language of the book to assist him with the introduction to the story and with question structures. However, when he has to rely on his own constructions he finds it difficult to deal with the demands of the text. His inconsistent use of the first and third person and personal pronoun *my* demonstrates progress towards the standard form of these features of English. Generally, his spelling shows a high degree of accuracy, suggesting that Ty relies heavily on the word bank provided by the teacher in the classroom. However, when using unknown words he appears to be relying on phonetic spelling strategies, e.g. *foun* (found), *mony* (money), *side* (said) and on one occasion he shows evidence of vowel transition when he uses *snack* instead of snake.

Writing and Spelling Development Behaviours Displayed by Ty

Sample: Six **Month:** August



Background

This writing activity was completed following the reading of a shared book *The Thing from Somewhere*, by Carol Blackburn. The teacher then completed and negotiated a writing activity in which she modelled the retelling of the story with assistance from the children. The teacher gave the children a worksheet on which the pictures were sequenced in the same order as the story. The children were then asked to retell the story in their own words with the assistance of the illustrations. During the completion of the activity an Ethnic Aide worked with the children and assisted them if necessary.

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Early Phase

- uses time order to sequence and organise writing
- attempts to orient, or create a context for the reader, but often assumes a shared context
- includes detail in written retell
- includes some dialogue
- uses little variety in sentence length
- uses knowledge of rhyme, rhythm and repetition in writing
- discusses word formations and meanings; noticing similarities and differences
- highlights words for emphasis, e.g. BIG
- adds words to clarify meaning
- attempts writing in both first and third person
- perseveres to complete writing tasks

Spelling Development

Phonetic Phase

- is willing to 'have a go' at representing speech in print form
- is beginning to use syllabification for spelling longer words. May omit some syllables, e.g. telefon (telephone), butufl (beautiful)
- chooses letters on the basis of sound without regard for conventional spelling patterns, e.g. kaj (cage), tabl (table), birgla (burglar)
- develops particular spellings for certain sounds often using self-formulated rules, e.g. becoz (because), woz (was)

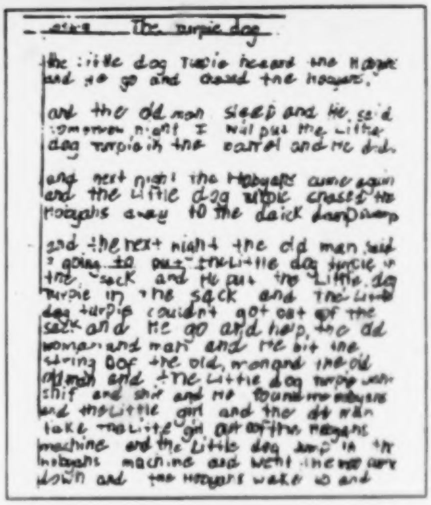
(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

In this activity the teacher provided Ty with scaffolding, which facilitated the sequencing of his retelling and allowed him to use the illustrations to make implicit cohesive ties, e.g. *ask that black thing over there.* He makes good use of dialogue and the use of the *I'm* pattern in his writing. He has begun to use the definite and indefinite article, a number of question forms and has made good use of the language structures provided in the book. Ty appears to be developing an increased sense of audience awareness in using a variety of address forms, e.g. *Hello* and *Hi.* The inconsistent use of pronouns, direct speech and the verb *to be*, e.g. *I looking, I lost,* demonstrates a continuing development of his knowledge of these language features. He continues to use phonetic spelling strategies and makes worthy attempts to spell new words, e.g. *anphian* (amphibian). Ty continues to make good use of the word banks provided by the teacher.

For information on Early Writing phase refer pages 24-39 Writing Developmental Continuum.	**For information on Phonetic Spelling phase refer pages 20-27 Spelling Developmental Continuum.**

Sample: Seven **Month:** September



Background

Prior to this writing activity, the teacher read *The Turpie Dog* to the children. Following a discussion about the story, the teacher demonstrated how to use a set of framework questions to complete a retelling. The children were then given the task of retelling *The Turpie Dog*.

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development

Early Writing Phase

◆ rereads own writing to maintain word sequence
- is preoccupied with a desire to get everything right
- sometimes uses full stops
- repeats familiar patterns, e.g. 'In the jungle I saw ...'
- joins simple sentences (often overusing the same connections, e.g. 'and', 'then'
- attempts to orient, or create a context for the reader, but often assumes a shared context

Conventional Writing Phase

- demonstrates knowledge of differences between narrative and informational text when writing
- uses a variety of connectors such as *and, so, because, if, next, after, before, first*
- uses titles and headings appropriately

Spelling Development

Phonetic Phase

- continues to 'have-a-go' - experimenting with spelling words in different ways
- adds an incorrect vowel after a correct vowel or consonant, e.g. hait (hat), derum (drum)

Transitional Phase

◆ uses letters to represent all vowel and consonant sounds in a word, placing vowels in every syllable, e.g. holaday (holiday), gramous (grandma's), castel (castle)
- is able to proofread known banks of words
- is beginning to use knowledge of word meanings, e.g. sign - signature, medicine - medical
- is willing to use a range of resources

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

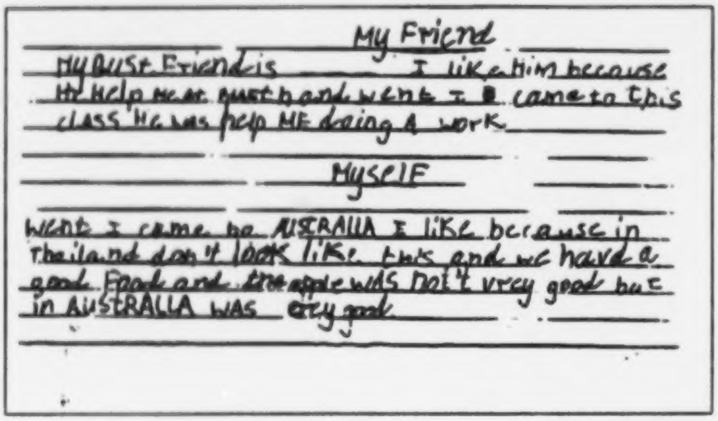
The Turpie Dog story used as a model for this retelling is complex and much of the information is provided implicitly. Ty appears to have understood the story structure and attempts to provide the implicit information contained in the story. This places heavy cognitive and linguistic demands upon him when he is still developing his own understandings of the mechanics of written English. In his efforts to reconstruct the story, he omits to explain how the old man and woman were captured because Turpie was not there to chase them away. This disrupts the meaning of the text to some degree. However, given the complexity of the task, he has been able to present most of the features of the story. He has shown a developing sense of sequencing the story by time and uses the linking conjunctions *and* and *next* to achieve this. He demonstrates the need to create visual pictures to elaborate by the use of adjectives taken from the original text. In the introduction, Ty uses the past tense on two occasions - *heard* and *chased*. However, in the same paragraph he uses *go* instead of *went*. From then on he moves between using the present and past tense, demonstrating considerable development in his understanding of tense. He is using different constructions to convey the future, e.g. *tomorrow night, the next night*.

For information on Early Writing and Conventional phases refer pages 42-57 Writing Developmental Continuum.	**For information on Phonetic and Transitional Spelling phases refer pages 30-38 Spelling Developmental Continuum.**

Sample: Eight **Month:** November

Background

Ty's teacher felt that Ty's oral English had developed to a high level of competence over a period of ten months. As a consequence, Ty moved to his Year level in the mainstream class. The new class had been discussing friendship and the children were asked to write a brief description about a friend. They were then asked to tell their friend about themselves.



My Friend

My Bust Friend is I like him because
He help me at maeth and went I came to this
class He was help ME doing A work

Myself

went I came to AUSTRALIA I like because in
Thailand don't look like this and we havd a
good Food and the apple was not't vrey good but
in AUSTRALIA was erey good

New Behaviours Displayed

Writing Development	*Spelling Development*
Early Writing Phase	*Phonetic Phase*
	• is willing to spell on his/her own
	Transitional Phase
Conventional Writing Phase	• is willing to take risks and responsibility

(Previously observed behaviours not included)

Comments

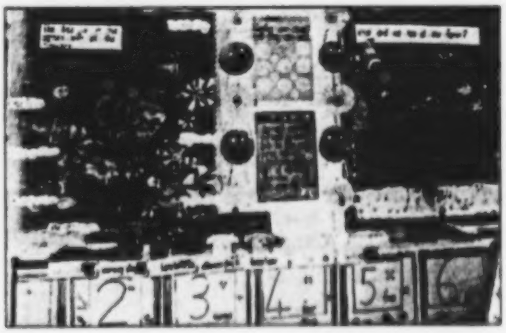
Ty has used an introductory sentence from the teacher but seems to be less dependent on copying and more capable of constructing his own sentences and spelling approximations. With his increased willingness to rely on his own constructions of language he appears to have temporarily focused more on the content of what is to be written and less on the mechanics such as upper and lower case. Ty appears to understand the need to use the past tense but has not yet grasped the conventional form, e.g. *havd* (we had), *don't* (didn't). He makes use of a new sentence beginning, a pattern not previously demonstrated in the other samples of his writing. He uses phonetic strategies to spell words not provided by the teacher, e.g. *maeth* (maths), *best* (bust). However, Ty is showing an increasing awareness of a variety of English letter sequences, e.g. *aeth* in maths. He spells very *-erey, vrey* - demonstrating a move towards relying on the visual patterns of English as a spelling strategy. Ty also makes an effort to correct his spelling, a practice not shown in previous samples.

SUMMARY OF TY'S WRITING AND SPELLING DEVELOPMENT

When Ty first attended the school, two weeks after his arrival in Australia, he demonstrated considerable understanding of the English writing system. This knowledge included a good sense of story structures and an understanding of concepts which he found difficult to express in writing in English. The teacher overcame this by scribing when she felt this was appropriate. Over the next ten months his writing samples demonstrate the following developments:

- Ty moved from relying on copying sentence patterns provided by the teacher to constructing his own sentences.
- Ty's writing performance changed in relation to the cognitive demands of the task in which he was engaged.
- His spelling changed from a reliance on sight words to the use of phonetic spelling strategies and moving into the transitional spelling strategies of visual patterning and vowel transitions.
- He showed increasing understanding of the construction of a variety of genres.
- He demonstrated a growing awareness of audience by introducing some descriptive passages in his later samples.
- Although Ty has not managed to achieve the use of conventional sentence structures, throughout the ten months - with increasing success - he has continued to experiment with the construction of tense, direct speech, definite and indefinite articles and pronouns.
- His willingness to participate and produce large amounts of writing demonstrates his ability to convey meaning through writing even in the early stages of second language development. He is able to construct fairly complex meanings with limited forms.

Once again, the close observation and recording of the teachers using the First Steps indicators has demonstrated the development made by Ty over a period of ten months. It is important to note that this development was demonstrated through indicators from several phases of the First Steps Continua. The pathway of development taken by Ty was different from that demonstrated by Cuong, which reflects their age, level of literacy in their first language, the classroom teaching context, and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.



MAPPING ESL CHILDREN'S WRITING AND SPELLING DEVELOPMENT USING THE FIRST STEPS DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUA

Teachers at Highgate Primary School were asked to observe and record the ESL children's development using the First Steps Writing and Spelling Continua. They were asked to identify those indicators which were not relevant or needed modification and extension. The details of their findings are documented in the next section.

Although there were some similarities between the writing development of young first and second language learners, teachers identified behaviours which differed from native English speakers. These differences related to:

- the way in which children shaped their practices according to their own cultural background;
- the experience and time children have had to practise speaking English;
- the age and level of literacy of the children in their home language; and
- how some children may demonstrate proficiency with some indicators at a different time or phase from native English speakers.

The key outline below provides the information needed to interpret the teacher's feedback about the Developmental Continua. Each phase includes:

◆ Key Indicators
• Indicators describing children's behaviours
▨ Highlighted indicators which are significant to ESL children.
These are numbered and referenced to teaching notes
• Teaching Notes

Note: Recording pages are included in the back of the First Steps Writing and Spelling Developmental Continua.

WRITING DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

The First Steps Writing Developmental Continuum describes five phases of development:

- Role Play
- Experimental
- Early Writing
- Conventional
- Advanced

Each phase lists indicators of behaviours that students typically display as their writing develops.

Teachers can use the Continuum as a diagnostic tool to:

- observe typical writing behaviours;
- highlight strengths;
- identify weaknesses; and
- plan a relevant and effective teaching program.

The First Steps Support Modules provide a range of activities and strategies for teachers to select that will encourage children to write.

Teachers at Highgate trialed the First Steps writing resources for two years and provided feedback on:

- the relevance of the Developmental Continuum in mapping the writing development of ESL learners;
- indicators in each phase which were significant for ESL learners; and
- successful First Steps strategies and activities.

Role Play Writing

Children are beginning to come to terms with a new aspect of language, that of written symbols. They experiment with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message or emulating adult writing.

[illegible]

Content and Organisation

- ◆ assigns a message to own symbols
- gives an oral account of direct experiences
- knows some favourite parts of stories, rhymes, jingles or songs
- reads text from memory or invents meaning (the meaning may change each time)
- writes and ask others to assign meaning to what has been written
- talks about own drawing and writing
- dictates for adult to write

Concepts and Conventions

- ◆ uses known letter or approximations of letters to represent written language
- draws symbols consisting of straight, curved or intersecting lines that simulate letters
- makes random marks on paper
- produces aimless or circular scribble
- makes horizontal or linear scribble with some breaks
- places letters randomly on page
- writes random strings of letters
- mixes letters, numerals and invented letter shapes
- experiments by 'flipping' or reversing letters
- experiments with upper and lower case letters. May show a preference for upper case
- repeats a few known alphabet symbols frequently using letters from own name
- copies print from environment
- ◆ shows beginning awareness of directionality, i.e. points to where print begins
- makes organisational decisions about writing, e.g. 'I'll start here so it will fit'
- copies layout of some text forms, e.g. letters, lists
- ◆ is aware that print carries a message
- role plays writing message for purpose, e.g. telephone messages
- states purpose for own 'writing', e.g. 'This is my shopping list'
- recognises own name (or part of it) in print, e.g. 'My name starts with that'
- attempts to write own name
- thinks own 'writing' can be read by others

Affective

- enjoys stories and asks for them to be retold and reread
- listens attentively to the telling or reading of stories and other texts
- 'writes' spontaneously for self rather than for an audience

Process

- ◆ understands that writing and drawing are different, e.g. points to text while 'reading'

Teaching Notes

1. Some ESL children may be aware of directionality of print in their first language. This may be different from English but should be noted.

Experimental Writing

Children are aware that speech can be written and that written messages remain constant.

They understand the left to right organisation of print and experiment with writing letters and words.

Some ESL learners may have an understanding of the print conventions of their home languages. These may vary from English.

Contents and Organisation

- ◆ ***reads back own writing***
- orally retells events in sequence
- orally recounts own experiences
- voices thoughts while writing
- ◆ ***experiments with familiar forms of writing, e.g. lists, letters***
- writes to communicate messages, direct experiences or feelings
- make no attempt to orient the reader as it is assumed that writer and reader share the context
- ◆ ***writes using simplified oral language structure, e.g. I brt loles***
- often begins sentence with 'I'
- repeats familiar words when writing, e.g. cat, cat, cat
- generates writing by repeating the same beginning patterns, e.g. 'I like cats, I like dogs, I like birds ...'
- recognises some words and letters in context

Concepts and Conventions

- ◆ ***realises that print contains a constant message***
- tells others what has been written
- asks others what has been written
- uses upper and lower case letters unconventionally when writing
- traces and copies letters with some successful formations
- ◆ ***uses left to right, and top to bottom, orientation of print***
- organises print direction left to right
- organises print direction top to bottom
- distinguishes between numerals and letters
- ◆ ***demonstrates one to one correspondence between written and spoken word***
- leaves a space between word-like clusters of letters
- dictates slowly so teacher can 'keep up' while scribing
- points to 'words' while reading own writing
- voices thoughts while reading
- [illegible]
- experiments with, and over-generalises, print conventions, e.g. puts a full stop after each word
- ◆ ***relies heavily on the most obvious sounds of a word***
- [illegible]

Affective

- listens attentively to the telling or reading of stories and other texts
- writes spontaneously for self or chosen audience

Process

- ◆ ***uses writing to convey meaning***

Teaching Notes

1. Some ESL children may be able to read back what they have written without necessarily understanding it.
2. Depending on the ESL learner's home language, some children may have difficulty distinguishing between sounds and identifying sounds. This indicator may not be demonstrated by those children.
3. Coping with the demands of a second language can be very tiring. When listening to stories some ESL learners may choose to 'switch off' for short periods. Teachers need to bear this in mind when assessing children's development.

Early Writing

Children write about topics which are personally significant.
They are beginning to consider audience needs.
They have a sense of sentence but may only be able to deal with one or two elements of writing at one time, e.g. spelling but not punctuation.

ESL learners may transfer some of the conventions of their first language to written English, for example punctuation, sentence structure and print orientation. In many cases ESL learners' level of writing may not reflect their cognitive understanding of text.

Content and Organisation

- ◆ *uses a small range of familiar text forms*
- uses a partial organisational framework, e.g. simple orientation and story development
- often writes simple recount of personal events or observation and comment
- uses time order to sequence and organise writing
- is beginning to use some narrative structure
- is beginning to use some informational text structures, e.g. recipes, factual description
- includes irrelevant detail in 'dawn to dark' recounts
- attempts to orient, or create a context for the reader, but often assumes a shared context
- rewrites known stories in sequence
- includes detail in written retell
- is beginning to use 'book' language, e.g. 'By the fire sat a cat.'
- attempts to transfer knowledge of text structure to writing, e.g. imitates form a familiar big book
- has difficulty staying on topic

1. [illegible] *is beginning to* [illegible] *language structures* [illegible] *sense of sentence* [illegible] *complete sentences with or without punctuation* [illegible]

- writes in a style that resembles oral language
- includes some dialogue
- use little variety in sentence length
- joins simple sentences (often overusing the same connectors, e.g. 'and', 'then')
- includes little elaboration, usually simple description
- uses knowledge of rhyme, rhythm and repetition in writing
- repeats familiar patterns, e.g. 'In the jungle I saw ...'

Word Usage

- ◆ *writes a range of words that are personally significant*
- discusses word formations and meanings; noticing similarities and differences
- transfers words encountered in talk, or reading, to writing
- highlights words for emphasis, e.g. BIG

Editing

2. [illegible]

- deletes words to clarify meaning
- adds words to clarify meaning
- begins to proofread for spelling errors
- adds information on request

Language Conventions

- ◆ *attempts to use some punctuation*
- sometimes uses full stops
- sometimes uses a capital letter to start a sentence
- uses capital letters for names
- attempts use of question marks
- attempts use of exclamation marks
- sometimes uses apostrophes for contractions
- overgeneralises use of print conventions, e.g. overuse of apostrophes
- often writes in the first person
- attempts writing in both first and third person

3. [illegible]
4. [illegible] appropriate [illegible] agreements
5. [illegible]

- writes a title which reflects content

Affective

- perseveres to complete writing tasks
- resents interruption
- is preoccupied with a desire to get everything right
- has difficulty writing because of the complexity of the task, e.g. attending to spelling, handwriting, composing, punctuation simultaneously

Process

- ◆ *re-reads own writing to maintain word sequence*

Teaching Notes

1. In demonstrating the use of English written language structures, teachers need to be aware that children may use syntax and punctuation related to their speech patterns and first language usage.

2. For ESL learners the effort of combining the physical, structural and composing skills in a new language is very demanding and editing may not be appropriate. This behaviour is likely to be demonstrated at a later phase of development for ESL students.

3-5. The ESL learner's first language may influence a number of grammatical conventions in English. It is likely that ESL learners will take longer to achieve conventional usage of these grammatical features.

Conventional Writing

Writers are familiar with most aspects of the writing process and are able to use common forms to suit different purposes. Their control of whole-text structure, punctuation and spelling may vary according to the complexity of the writing task.

[redacted]

Content and Organisation

- ◆ *uses text forms to suit purpose and audience (may not control all essential elements, e.g. may use narrative language when writing informational text)*

[redacted]

- writes using a variety of forms
- demonstrates the ability to develop a topic
- demonstrates knowledge of differences between narrative and information text when writing
- shows evidence of planning before writing (may be oral or written plan)
- organises the structure of writing more effectively, e.g. uses headings, subheadings

[redacted]

- shows evidence of personal voice (where appropriate)
- considers the needs of audience and includes background information
- can transfer information from reading to writing, e.g. takes notes for project
- ◆ *uses simple, compound and extended sentences*
- often includes dialogue
- uses dialogue to enhance character development
- show evidence of the transfer of literary language from reading to writing

[redacted]

- groups sentences containing related information into paragraphs
- orders ideas in time order or other sequence such as priority order
- links ideas coherently in whole texts
- uses a variety of connectors such as and, so, because, if, next, after, before, first

Word Usage

- ◆ *is beginning to select vocabulary according to the demands of audience and purpose, e.g. uses subject-specific vocabulary*
- uses some similes or metaphors in an attempt to enhance meaning
- uses words that adequately convey meaning but lack variety

[redacted]

- provides sufficient information but little elaboration

[redacted]

Editing

- ◆ *edits and proofreads own writing after composing*
- reorders text to clarify meaning, e.g. moves word, phrases and clauses
- reorders words to clarify meaning
- attempts to correct punctuation
- recognises most misspelled words and attempts corrections - from known word banks

Language Conventions

- ◆ *punctuates simple sentences correctly*
- uses capital letters for proper nouns
- uses capital letters to start sentences
- uses capital letters for titles
- uses full stops to end sentences
- uses question marks correctly
- sometimes uses commas
- uses apostrophes for possession
- writes apostrophes for contractions

[redacted]

- use titles and headings appropriately

Affective

- writes for enjoyment
- writes to get things done
- experiments with calligraphy, graphics and different formats
- manipulates language for fun, e.g. puns, symbolic character or place names (Ms Chalk, the teacher, Pitsville)

Process

- ◆ *re-reads and revises while composing*

Teaching Notes

1. Teachers need to be aware that because of differences in first language background some ESL learners may find it difficult to use rhyme and rhythm. However, when these strategies are modelled by the teacher some ESL students may demonstrate the use of such language structures.

2. Given the relative complexity of this aspect of writing, ESL learners may have difficulty in finding the appropriate English language structures to express themselves from another point of view.

3. ESL learners are most likely to demonstrate this behaviour when the teacher regularly provides written models for the children and explicitly demonstrates the important language feature such as cohesive ties, e.g. however, next.

4. ESL learners are likely to rely on familiar vocabulary until they gain the confidence to experiment with new vocabulary. This indicator may take longer to develop in ESL students.

5-6. ESL learners may take longer to gain the confidence to use the range of vocabulary required to demonstrate these behaviours. However, it should be remembered that ESL students may readily acquire these behaviours when they are regularly provided in written language models.

7. ESL students may take time to be able to use colloquialisms and cliches appropriately even though they may attempt to do so.

8-11. Depending on the student's first language, these particular conventions may take longer to develop and need to be consolidated in a number of different contexts. Forms do not necessarily represent the complexity of the message the learner is able to convey.

Advanced Writing

Writers have developed a personal style of writing and are able to manipulate forms of writing to suit their purposes. They have control over spelling and punctuation. They choose from a large vocabulary and their writing is cohesive, coherent and satisfying.

The teachers at Highgate found that children who were working in the Advanced Writing phase were most likely to display behaviours similar to native English speakers.

Content and Organisation

- *selects form to suit purpose and audience demonstrating control over essential elements*
- *demonstrates success in writing a wide range of forms*
- *uses personal voice effectively (where appropriate)*
- *has sufficient information to fulfil demands of writing tasks*
- *has sufficient quality ideas to fulfil the demands of writing tasks*
- *develops topic fully*
- *uses plan to organise ideas*
- *uses appropriate organising features such as headings*
- *sustains coherence and cohesion throughout text*
- *demonstrates ability to view writing from a reader's perspective*
- *writes a complete, succinct orientation*
- *establishes place, time and situation in writing*
- *consciously varies writing to suit audience needs*
- *uses a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences appropriate to text form*
- *deliberately chooses syntactic patterns to enhance the text and varies these according to audience and purpose*
- *uses complex sentences with embedded clauses or phrases, e.g. 'My friend Jane, who lives next door,...'*
- *understands and uses appropriate connectors*
- *signals cause and effect using - if, then because, so since, result in, brings about ...*
- *signals comparisons using - like, different from, however, resembles, whereas, similar ...*
- *signals alternatives using - on the other hand, otherwise, conversely, either, instead (of), whether ...*
- *signals time order using - later, meanwhile, subsequently, initially, finally ...*

Word Usage

- *uses a wide range of words that clearly and precisely convey meaning in a particular form*
- *selects words, clauses or phrases for their shades of meaning and impact on style*
- *orders words for effect*
- *elaborates ideas to convey coherent meaning*
  sustains appropriate language throughout, e.g. formal language in a business letter
- *uses abstract and technical terms in context*
- *uses humour, sarcasm or irony*
- *uses idioms and colloquialisms to enhance writing*
- *attempts to involve reader by the use of metaphor, simile, imagery and other literary devices that require commitment from the reader*

Editing

- *edits own writing independently during and after composing*
- *restructures words, phrases, clauses, paragraphs and whole texts to clarify and achieve precise meaning*

Language Conventions

- *demonstrates accurate use of punctuation*
- *demonstrates accurate use of:*
  capital letters
  full stops
  commas for a variety of purposes
  quotation marks
  exclamation marks
  apostrophes for contractions
  apostrophes for ownership
  paragraphing
  brackets and dashes
- *realises that punctuation can be used to alter meaning*
- *uses punctuation to enhance meaning*

Affective

- *writes for enjoyment, to get things done and for personal expression*
- *shows interest in the craft of writing*
- *is motivated to write by a desire to complete school-imposed tasks that fulfil curriculum requirements*

Process

- *reflects on, and critically evaluates, own writing*

FIRST STEPS ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Writing takes place across all curriculum areas and needs to be promoted in a positive and purposeful way. ESL learners need the opportunity to write daily in an enriched supportive environment, thus providing practice in the formalities of the English written language system. Thorough planning needs to occur before any writing task, taking into account students' stage of writing development, so that teachers can select appropriate strategies to promote further understandings and skills. As learners come from many diverse backgrounds, writing sessions should be based on familiar experiences.

It is also important for teachers to be aware of the learning approaches students have encountered. These approaches may influence their learning, e.g. willingness to take risks etc.

The following First Steps Strategies were found to be particularly useful:

- Writing daily
- Displaying print in different contexts
- Making writing purposeful
- Writing for a variety of audiences
- Demonstrating connection between oral and written language
- Focusing on alphabet knowledge
- Demonstrating one-to-one correspondence of written and spoken words
- Using correct terminology, e.g. letters, words, sounds
- Encouraging oral retelling of familiar stories
- Encouraging use of 'have-a-go' books
- Making big books that are related to children's experiences
- Responding to children's writing with a message
- Accepting approximations and congratulating children on their attempts
- Making story maps (use them to retell stories)
- Reading a variety of texts
- Using word banks and cards (demonstrate their use)
- Planning writing across the curriculum
- Providing a range of dictionaries and writing materials
- Encouraging Acting Out (Readers Theatre)
- Teaching children to proofread
- Encouraging children to take responsibility for their own writing
- Using oral tape recording of initial drafts and wordprocessing to facilitate meaning
- Using tapes and books in home languages for ESL and English speakers to follow

- Constructing class books

  These relate to the children's current needs and experiences and incorporate text familiar to the children.

- Frameworks

  Frameworks provide a structure for children to follow. Picture sequences and talk bubbles can be used to support text construction.

- Reading and writing for self as well as for children everyday

  This helps extend the children's literacy experiences and knowledge of different genres.

- Shared Books Sessions

  These help the teacher to focus on patterns and specific language forms currently needing attention in the class within a context that is familiar to the children. They can hear the sounds of English and view them in print at the same time. Books that are related to the children's experiences will help develop a positive attitude to reading and writing.

SPELLING DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

The First Steps Spelling Developmental Continuum describes five phases of spelling development:

- Preliminary
- Semi-Phonetic
- Phonetic
- Transitional
- Independent

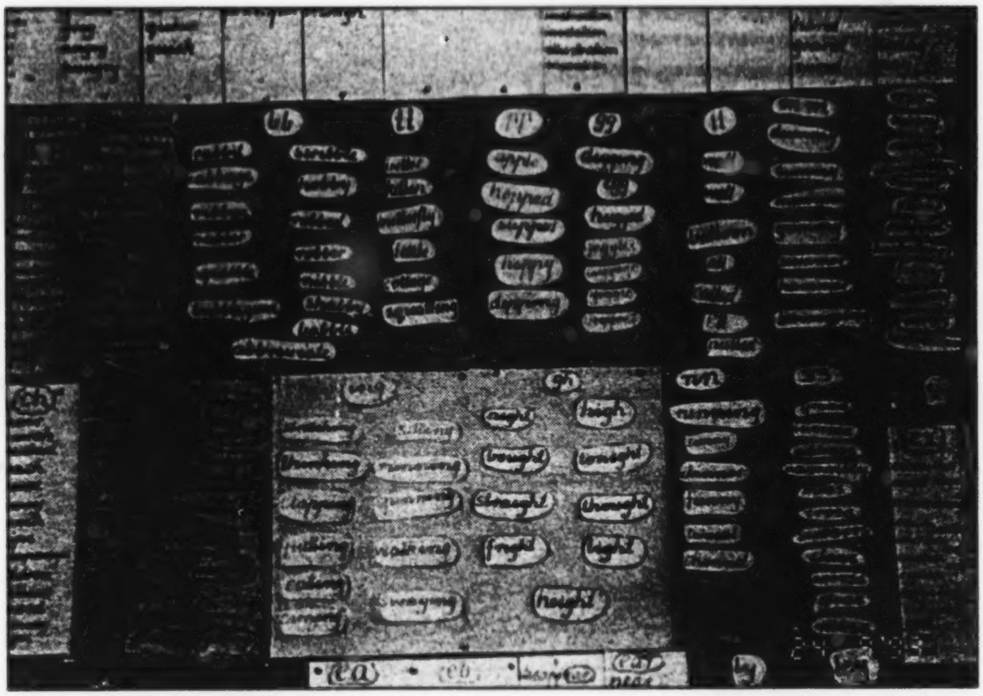
Each phase lists indicators of behaviours that students typically display as their spelling develops. Teachers can use the continuum as a diagnostic tool to:

- observe typical spelling behaviours;
- highlight strengths and identify weaknesses; and
- plan a relevant and effective teaching program.

The First Steps Support Modules provide a range of strategies and activities to promote spelling development.

Teachers at Highgate trialed the First Steps spelling resources for two years and provided feedback on:

- the relevance of the Developmental Continuum for mapping the spelling development of ESL students;
- indicators in each phase which were significant for ESL students; and
- successful First Steps strategies and activities.



Preliminary Phase

In this phase children become aware that print carries a message. They experiment with writing-like symbols as they try to represent written language. Their writing is not readable by others as understandings of sound-symbol relationships have yet to develop.

[illegible]

Indicators of Spelling Development

Language and Literacy Behaviours

- draws symbols that resemble letters using straight, curved, intersecting lines
- uses a combination of pictorial and letter representations
- places letters randomly on a page
- mixes letters, numerals and invented letter shapes
- repeats some known alphabet symbols (often uses letters from own name)
- writes random strings of letters
- ◆ ***uses writing-like symbols to represent written language***
- ◆ ***uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language***
- ◆ ***assigns a message to own symbols***
- shows beginning awareness of directionality

Word Knowledge

- knows that writing and drawing are different
- knows that a word can be written down
- ◆ ***is aware that print carries a message***
- may read own writing differently at each reading
- recognises own name or part of it (e.g. 'That letter is in my name')
- writes the first letter of name correctly and finishes the word with a random string of letters
- writes own name correctly
- names or labels own writing and pictures using a variety of symbols
- reacts to environmental print

Affective

[illegible]

- experiments with writing-like forms

[illegible]

Teaching Notes

At this level of development, children often use symbols from the print they are surrounded by, which may include their first language. Thus, their initial attempts at spelling may incorporate a mixture of both codes and there may be some transfer across sounds/symbol systems.

1. This behaviour may be culturally inappropriate for some ESL children who may not wish to approximate spelling. In such cases teachers need to decide whether or not it is appropriate to model this behaviour or provide children with alternate strategies.

2,3,4. It may be difficult to see evidence of these behaviours until such time as children's spoken English enables them to participate in such discussions. However, ESL children may be able to explain information about spelling and what has been written in their first language.

Semi-Phonetic Phase

In this phase children show developing understanding of sound-symbol relationships. Their spelling attempts show some evidence of sound-symbol correspondence. They may represent a whole word with one, two or three letters.

[redacted]

Language and Literacy Behaviours

◆ ***uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print***

Strategies

[redacted]

◆ ***represents a whole word with one, two or three letters. Uses mainly consonants, e.g. KGR (kangaroo) BT (bit)***

- uses an initial letter to represent most words in a sentence, e.g. I wtt (I went to town)
- uses letter names to represent sounds, syllables or words e.g. AT (eighty)
- uses a combination of consonants with a vowel related to a letter name, e.g. GAM (game), MI (my)
- uses more letters for longer words
- writes one or two letters for sounds then adds random letters to complete the word, e.g. crecuea (creature), greim (grass)
- beginning to use some simple common letter pattens, e.g. th (the), bck (bike)
- uses a small bank of known sight words correctly

Word Knowledge

- recognises some sound-symbol relationships in context, e.g. points to 'ship' and says 'sh'
- recognises some words in context, e.g. 'That word says "dog".'

[redacted]

- begins to leave spaces between word-like letter clusters, e.g. I h bn sik (I have been sick)
- confuses words with objects they represent, e.g. 'Train is a long word because trains are long, caterpillar is a little word because ...'

Affective

- is willing to 'have a go' at representing speech in print form
- is confident to experiment with words
- talks about what has been drawn, written

[redacted]

- is keen to share written language discoveries with others

Teaching Notes

1. When making phonetic approximations some ESL students may hear and represent the sounds which relate to their first language. Thus, the sounds represented may not be the same ones chosen by a native English speaker. They also tend to rely on letter names to assist them in their approximations. Because some students prefer to use the visual patterns of English as they learn to write they may move quickly to the next phase of development.

2. Depending on the learner's home language, some children may have difficulty distinguishing between sounds and identifying rhymes. Learners need time to become familiar with the intonation and rhythm of English and require visual strategies to facilitate their spelling development.

3. Copying appears to be an important strategy for ESL learners so it is important for teachers to provide explicit word banks created from related reading, writing and oral language activities.

4. For some ESL learners, questioning the teacher or other children may not be culturally acceptable, thus this behaviour may not be apparent.

Phonetic Phase

In this phase children are able to provide an almost perfect match between letters and sounds. Letters are chosen on the basis of sound, often without regard for conventional letter patterns. Spelling attempts are meaningful and becoming more like standard spelling.

In this phase ESL children show an understanding of sound-symbol relationships and may generalise between languages. Spelling attempts show evidence of sound-symbol correspondence and the children represent a whole word with symbols corresponding to the sounds they hear, which may not match those of native English speakers.

Language and Literacy Behaviours

- chooses letters on the basis of sound without regard for conventional spelling patterns, e.g. kaj (cage), tabl (table), birgla (burglar)
- develops particular spellings for certain sounds often using self-formulated rules, e.g. becoz (because), woz (was)
- substitutes incorrect letters for those with similar pronunciation, e.g. oshan (ocean), nacher (nature)

1 adds an incorrect vowel [illegible] correct vowel or consonant, e.g. [illegible] ([illegible]), [illegible] (drum) [illegible]

2 represents past tense in different ways according to the sounds heard, e.g. stopt (stopped), watcht (watched), livd (lived)

- uses the letter 'r' to represent a syllable, e.g. watr (water), mothr (mother)

3 confuses [illegible] vowel sounds, e.g. pell (pull)

- sometimes omits one letter of a two-letter blend or digraph, e.g. fog (frog), mik (milk)

Strategies

- ◆ ***chooses letters on the basis of sound, e.g. vampia (vampire), pepl (people)***
- ◆ ***sounds out and represents all the essential sounds in a word, e.g. kitn (kitten), wacht (watched), spidr (spider), isgrem (icecream)***
- still uses some letter name strategies, e.g. awa (away), exellnt (excellent)
- usually spells commonly used sight words correctly, e.g. in, has, his, he, my
- uses some known patterns in words, e.g. mathursday (mothers' day), nght (night)
- is beginning to use syllabification for spelling longer words, may omit some syllables, e.g. telefon (telephone), butufl (beautiful)

Word Knowledge

4 shows increased influence of spelling words encountered in books

5 identifies similar sounding words

6 is beginning to use simple homonyms/homophones correctly, e.g. their/there, pair/pear

7 continues to 'have-a-go' experimenting with spelling words in different ways

Affective

- is willing to 'have-a-go' at representing speech in print form
- sees self positively as a writer-speller
- confidently makes decisions
- is willing to spell on his/her own
- uses word sources confidently

Teaching Notes

1. Some ESL learners may use different vowel patterns from those used by native English speakers. The vowels they choose may relate to the sounds of their first language.
2. For some ESL students the use of the past tense in their oral language takes some time to develop. Some children may take longer to develop this behaviour or skip representing the past tense in different ways because they have already developed an understanding about the past tense morpheme *ed*.
3. This confusion may be particularly difficult for ESL learners who need to hear, see and write vowel sounds simultaneously.
4. ESL students need repeated opportunities to read and reread words encountered in books in order to transfer them into their spelling system.
5. Teachers need to help ESL children identify similar sounding words by making this explicit as they sort words used in the language program.
6. This maybe a difficult task for ESL children and they may take more time to develop this knowledge.
7. This behaviour may be culturally inappropriate for some ESL children who may not wish to approximate spelling. In such cases teachers need to decide whether or not it is appropriate to model this behaviour or provide children with alternate strategies.

Transitional Phase

In this phase children are moving away from heavy reliance on the phonetic strategy towards the use of visual and meaning-based strategies. They may still have difficulty recognising if a word 'looks right', but should be able to proof their known bank of words. Writing will show evidence of an increasing bank of learned words.

> *In this phase ESL children will show a developing understanding of the English spelling system. However, they may rely more heavily on visual strategies than phonetic strategies and like many native English speakers may remain in this phase for some time.*

Language and Literacy Behaviours

1. uses a range of English letter sequences, when attempting to spell unknown words, e.g. thousend (thousand), cort (caught), doler (dollar)
2. uses vowel digraphs liberally - may be unsure of correct usage, e.g. plaiyed, kaingarows, rane

- uses silent 'e' as an alternative for spelling long vowel sounds - may be over-generalised, e.g. mite (might), biye (buy)
- correctly inserts a vowel before the 'r' at the end of a word, e.g. 'brother' instead of 'brothr'

3. spells inflectional endings such as -s, -ing, -est, -tion, -ious, -ough

- includes all the correct letters but may sequence them incorrectly: yuo (you)
- begins to make spelling generalisations (uses some double letters correctly)
- is able to proofread known bank of words

Strategies

4. *uses letters to represent all vowel and consonant sounds in a word, placing vowels in every syllable, e.g. holaday (holiday), gramous (grandma's)*

- *is beginning to use visual strategies, such as knowledge of common letter patterns and critical features of words, e.g. silent letters*

5. usually represents all syllables when spelling a word, e.g. incontrollablely (uncontrollably)

Word Knowledge

- is developing a bank of sophisticated words that are used in writing, e.g. February, Christmas, restaurant, diameter, conservation
- is beginning to use knowledge of word parts, e.g. prefixes, suffixes, compound words

6. uses more difficult homonyms/homophones correctly, e.g. sore/soar, pour/poor, board/bored

Affective

The child:

7. is willing to take risks and responsibility
8. has a go at spelling vocabulary appropriate to specific subject matter, e.g. latitude (latitude), electrisity (electricity), experament (experiment)

- is aware of social obligations as a speller
- is willing to use a range of resources
- has an interest in words and enjoys using them

Teaching Notes

1. Some ESL learners may need time in order to attempt to spell unknown words as they tend to prefer to make use of known words whenever possible.

2. Learners from particular ESL backgrounds may show this characteristic more often than others.

3. ESL students may take some time to develop an understanding of inflectional endings. They need repeated practice at hearing and seeing these words simultaneously.

4-5. ESL students may need time in order to develop this strategy.

6. The complexity of understanding this knowledge may require explicit teaching for this behaviour to be displayed.

7-8. These behaviours may be difficult for children from particular cultural backgrounds who will make every effort to spell correctly. They need to be supported in their efforts and provided with resources to assist them to spell new vocabulary.

Independent Phase

In this phase children have become aware of the many patterns and rules that are characteristic of the English spelling system. When spelling a new word they use a multi-strategy approach. They have the ability to recognise when a word doesn't look right and to think of alternative spellings. Spellers in this phase will have accumulated a large bank of known words that they can automatically recall.

[redacted]

Language and Literacy Behaviours

- ◆ *is aware of the many patterns and rules that are characteristic of the English spelling system, e.g. common English letter patterns; relationship between meaning and spelling*
- ◆ *makes generalisations and is able to apply them to new situations, e.g. rules for adding suffixes, selection of appropriate letter patterns (-tion)*
- ◆ *has mastered accurate spelling of prefixes, suffices, contractions, compound words*
- ◆ *uses context to distinguish homonyms and homophones*
- ◆ *uses silent letters and double consonants correctly*
- ◆ *continues to master words with uncommon spelling patterns and words with irregular spelling, e.g. eight, aisle*
- ◆ *uses less common letter patterns correctly, e.g. weird, forfeit, cough, reign*

Strategies

- ◆ *uses a multi-strategy approach to spelling (visual patterns, sound patterns, meaning)*
- ◆ *is able to recognise when a word doesn't look right and think of alternative spellings*
- ◆ *analyses and checks work, editing, writing and correcting spelling*
- ◆ *recognises word origins and uses this information to make meaningful associations between words*
- ◆ *continues to experiment when writing new words*
- ◆ *uses spelling references (dictionaries, thesauruses, resource books) appropriately*
- ◆ *uses syllabification when spelling new words, e.g. illeagle (illegal)*

Word Knowledge

- ◆ *has accumulated a large bank of known words (is using more sophicticated language)*
- ◆ *shows increased interest in the similarities, differences, relationships and origins of words*

Affective

- ◆ *is willing to take risks and responsibility - is aware of social obligations as a speller*
- ◆ *has a positive attitude towards self as a speller*
- ◆ *has an interest in words and enjoys using them*
- ◆ *is willing to use a range of resources*

Teaching Notes

Teachers need to be aware of effective strategies used by ESL learners when they reach this phase, which may not be used as frequently by native English speakers. Such strategies need to be supported and developed.

FIRST STEPS ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SPELLING DEVELOPMENT

The following First Steps Teaching Strategies were found to be useful:

- *Teaching spelling in context. Words should be meaningful*
- Developing an awareness of letter names
- Developing an understanding of concepts of print
- Introducing vocabulary related to letters, sounds, words, sentences
- Encouraging children to write and experiment with print
- Introducing shared-book activities - to emphasise syntax, semantics, conventions and the sounds of the English language
- Using word banks, alphabet charts, class-made dictionaries
- Playing games that encourage children to focus on sounds of words, e.g. sorting and classifying games, What-Comes-Next? (page 42 Word Study Module)
- Demonstrating a range of spelling strategies, e.g. having a go, using word banks or dictionaries, editing own writing, using classroom print
- Praising all attempts at spelling new words
- Playing games that require conventional spelling, e.g. Scrabble, Crosswords, Tic Tac Toe, What Comes Next? etc.
- Using patterned poems that make use of repeated phrases, refrains and rhymes

Refer to the First Steps Modules for many other strategies.

SECTION III

Supporting Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in the Classroom

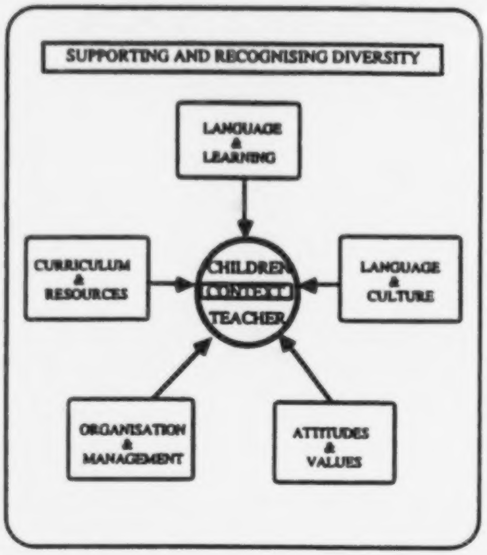
- Cultural Diversity
- Language and Culture
- Attitudes and Values
- Organisation and Management
- Curriculum and Resources
- Language and Learning
- English as a Second Language
- Key Strategies to Support English as a Second Language
- The Teacher's Use of English

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Introduction

Many children for whom English is not a first language, come to school with a vast range of knowledge and competence in other languages. Often, these children are learning to use more than two languages. Consequently, they are making complex choices about the appropriate type and form of language to use in particular contexts. Thus, for many children, language would seem to be one of their most powerful assets, one which needs to be built upon and extended, if they are to realise their full potential.

When planning ways of helping children to become more effective communicators, teachers need to consider what we are helping children to do with language and how this is being done. If we want children to become more powerful communicators of their ideas and to be able to reflect critically on the ideas of others, this has implications for helping children to become autonomous learners in the classroom context. To build on cultural and linguistic diversity in a way that allows children to have more control over their learning, there are a number of issues which need to be considered. They will be explored under the five areas presented in the following model:



Note: Children who do not speak English as their first language come to school with varying levels of linguistic competence, ranging from one language to several. It is difficult to describe this particular group of children, with any degree of accuracy, in a way that captures the complexity of their developing skills. This group includes children who are bi-dialectic as well as bilingual and multilingual. Because the term 'non-English' sometimes implies a deficit model of language, the term 'bilingual' will be used to identify children for whom English is not a first language. Although this term is also inadequate, it seeks to recognise that many children are developing English in addition to one or more languages.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Children learn to use language through involvement in particular social and cultural contexts. Children become competent language users through the opportunities they are given to interact with peers and adults. The social activities that children are involved in shape their language patterns and perceptions about language. These 'understandings' will differ according to the linguistic, cultural and religious background of each individual. It is through these opportunities and experiences that the foundations of identity are laid. Thus, language is a major factor in shaping identity.

School plays an important part in shaping and affirming the learner's developing sense of identity. Recognising and valuing individual identity has important educational implications for all children, but particularly for those whose cultural, religious and linguistic background may be largely unfamiliar to the teacher.

Although culture and self-identity are complex and changing phenomena, it is important to look at ways in which identity is being constructed and supported in the community and in the school.

- What are the cultural and religious backgrounds of the learners in your class?
- What languages are spoken at home and within the learner's community?
- How does the learner and community view the use and development of their language?
- Does the learner's [illegible] language [illegible] support outside the home and school [illegible] Community Language School?
- What aspects of the learner's background have significant implications for your classroom practice?
- What might be the most useful [illegible] information [illegible] have questions about [illegible]
- What is the role [illegible] your school [illegible] partnership [illegible]

ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Attitudes come from the teacher, the children, parents/caregiver and the community at large, and permeate and influence classroom life in both overt and covert ways.

Attitudes are reflected through:

- interaction with children and adults in the school context;
- the curriculum and associated resources; and
- the organisation and management of learning.

All classrooms manifest values of one kind or another. The question is whose value system is embodied in your classroom, and what are the consequences of this for the children in your class and the community at large?

Because attitudes and values are so deeply embedded within us, they are difficult to identify and perhaps even more difficult to change. However, it might be useful to start exploring the way in which your attitudes are reflected in your interactions with the children in your class.

- **Are you aware of the range of different cultural interactional styles in your classroom? This includes culturally-based action and beliefs such as:**
  - **body movements;**
  - **gestures;**
  - **holding hands;**
  - **eye contact;**
  - **lip movements;**
  - **interpretation and use of silence;**
  - **forms of address;**
  - **appropriate use of left and right hands;**
  - **interaction with and responses to adults;**
  - **learning styles and beliefs about how to learn; and**
  - **beliefs about gender and age-appropriate behaviour.**

- Are you [illegible] example.
  - [illegible]
  - [illegible] politeness [illegible] culturally bound.
  - [illegible]

- Do you appear [illegible] respond to some children [illegible] more than others? [illegible]

- Consider [illegible] individual or groups of children. [illegible] are these based on?

- **What is your attitude to the recognition of diversity and difference? How is this reflected in your practice?**

- **Are the learners in your class able to share and explore experiences and understandings that are important to them, which may unfamiliar to you?**

- **How do you respond to incidents that are perceived as racist, by you, the children or the parents?**

- **Do you take account of the wishes and expectations of parents? How do you respond to these?**

- **Given the discrimination and hostility that is experienced by some communities, how do you address this in your teaching?**

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The learner's developing sense of self, understanding of others and appreciation of diversity and difference can be greatly enhanced by the way in which the classroom is organised and managed. Although interactions are highly complex and many decisions are made on a moment-to-moment basis, it can be very revealing to 'step back' and consider particular aspects of classroom practice.

- How do you group children? Do you encourage children from different ethnic groups to work together and share their cultural and linguistic backgrounds? Do you encourage children from the same linguistic background to work together so that they can explore concepts in their home/community languages?
- How do you take individual needs into account, particularly in relation to cultural and religious practices, e.g. appropriate clothing and changing arrangements for sport, particular dietary requirements etc.?
- How do you give responsibility, reward and sanction children and on what basis you make these decisions?
- How do you assess children? Do you take cultural and linguistic factors into account when evaluating children's progress? Is it possible to identify progress in the children's home/community language?

CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES

The content of the curriculum and how it is taught embodies particular views about language and learning and about what is valued. Resources and materials convey messages which have a powerful influence on the learner's developing understanding of the world and his or her place in it. Resources that reflect the diversity of Australian culture clearly give a different message from resources which tend to convey only one aspect of Australian society.

- When considering resources it is useful to identify who is represented, how they are represented and what they are doing. Do the resources represent cultural diversity? Do the resources reflect the achievements and contributions of a range of people from different cultural backgrounds?
- How can you help children to read texts critically, e.g. to identify bias, stereotyping, omission, accuracy and challenge the 'authority' of the text?
- What is the place of equal opportunity in curriculum planning? Does the curriculum maintain inequalities or identify and confront them?
- Does the curriculum reflect individual differences within the classroom as well as the diversity of Australian society as a whole? How are you developing biculturalism alongside bilingualism for all your learners?

LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

Community Languages

The maintenance and development of the learner's community language(s) within the classroom is a controversial and complex issue. However, if as suggested earlier, language is seen as central to the learners developing a sense of self and intellectual growth, then support for community languages is fundamental to learning.

As well as providing a link between home and school, research suggests that emerging competence in one language can actively support the development of a second language, while enabling the learner to master new concepts. Evidence suggests the development of bilingualism enhances intellectual growth as well as supporting emotional wellbeing.

In addition to this, recognition of community languages gives important messages to children who are not bilingual, as well as enriching the language climate of the classroom. Finally, the support that children get influences not only their own linguistic development but the language use of their communities.

Even if you do not share the community languages of your children, there are a number of ways in which support can be given.

- **How are community languages recognised and valued throughout the school?**
- **Are children encouraged to use their community language in the classroom? Are they encouraged to talk, read and write in their own languages?**
- **Do the children's skills in their community languages form part of your assessment procedures?**
- **Are monolingual children encouraged to develop an understanding and use of languages other than English?**
- **How many school staff share the community languages of the children?**

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The process of second language development seems to be a result of the interplay between internal factors, such as the learner's age, personality, first language development, learning style and cognitive level, and external factors such as the social and cultural context in which language is developed. The relative influence of each factor will determine both the rate and route of development and level of competence achieved.

There are many ways in which English as a second language can be developed in the classroom context. Decisions about the 'best' way rest with the teacher's knowledge of the children's individual needs and the context in which the teaching and learning is taking place. However, it is possible to consider the relationship between what the learner brings to the classroom and factors that may influence the development of English.

- To a greater or lesser extent the learner already 'knows' about how his or her first language works in particular contexts for specific purposes. Thus, the learner brings a wealth of knowledge and experience into the classroom which forms the basis of his or her understanding and further development. Thus, on the whole, this 'transfer' between languages is extremely positive.

- Some of the processes involved in first and second language acquisition are thought to be similar for young second language learners. For example, a number of surface errors, such as overgeneralisation of the past tense and plural forms, are seen as developmental. These gradually disappear as learners receive feedback from other speakers and use this as a means of testing and refining their understanding of the grammatical system.

  However, there may be some aspects of English which are problematic for particular learners. These are often related to the differences between the learner's first and second language and include:
  - pronunciation;
  - stress, rhythm and intonation; and
  - some aspects of syntax, e.g. word order.

- Learners in the early stages of becoming bilingual may need time to tune-in to the sounds, rhythm and intonation patterns of English. At first, some learners may wish to watch and listen, or join in, but not contribute verbally in English. For young learners, this may be an especially distressing time. To be in an unfamiliar situation, where noone seems to understand what you are trying to say, may be a very frightening experience, hence the need to find ways of supporting the learner's community language while creating opportunities to hear and use English.

- Many learners in the early stages of development appear to use whole 'chunks' of language, which are easily transferable to a range of different contexts. These enable the learner to join in with others and get feedback on their constructions. For example, *Can I have that one? I don't know, sit down please, everybody listen* etc. These are often phrases which are frequently heard in the classroom context. These formulas are eventually broken down into smaller parts and key elements are replaced, e.g. *Can I have book?*, *Can I have play time?*, forming part of the learner's underlying syntactical system.

- ESL learners often use particular forms of language to convey a complex range of functions. Form and function do not necessarily develop simultaneously as the learner's cognitive level is often far in advance of his or her English competence in the early stages of the development.

- Many learners are able to switch between languages according to the purpose of the message and the audience to whom it is addressed. Code mixing also occurs when learners draw on their linguistic repertoire to ensure effective communication.

- In addition to identifying linguistic similarities and differences between first and second language development, it is important to consider the learner's cultural background. Although culture is constantly evolving, it is possible to identify culturally-specific interaction styles which may differ radically from those of the teacher. Knowledge of these differences has important implications for effective classroom practice, e.g. in some cultures it may not be appropriate to question the authority of the teacher; in other cultures this may depend on whether the teacher is male or female.

- Finally, research suggests that, as with first language development, second language development is facilitated through meaningful interaction; i.e. children learn a second language by using it in meaningful contexts. In the classroom context, language and learning are seen as inextricably linked and development is thought to take place through the child's readiness to make meaning from the context. If this view is accepted, it is possible to identify key strategies within a classroom context that will support second language development. These are outlined in the following section.

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KEY STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Planning Activities in which Children Need to Talk

These give the learner a reason to communicate. Activities that are culturally relevant and appropriate and match the learner's intellectual level ensure cognitive and linguistic involvement. Providing an environment in which learners feel confident to use English and are willing to take risks is central to development, e.g. dramatic activities, barrier games, retelling stories, problem-solving activities, excursions, interactive games, Chinese Whispers, presenting cultural viewpoints etc.

Planning Activities in which Learners Need to Collaborate

Through collaboration children build on each other's talk, extend their range of phrases and negotiate meaning. This enables the learner to play an active part in the activity and contribute at his or her own level, e.g. make a story - each person is given a piece of a story and with their group they need to decide where their part of the story fits into the story sequence; matching cards - children must listen to and ask questions of other children in a group to ascertain who has the card(s) they require; special days; making group models; find your partner; word games etc.

Planning Activities that are Practical

In the early stages of development, if meaning is embedded in the 'here and now', learners are able to relate actions and objects to words and phrases. Extension of past experiences can also provide a scaffolding for development. As far as possible, learning should be based on active participation in a range of different activities involving practical problem solving, exploring and creating through the use of multimedia, e.g. board games, card games, speaking at assembly, morning talks, introducing visitors, role playing acceptable behaviour, discussing and negotiating classroom rules, telephone conversations, making videos/radio shows, taped interviews with staff and other students etc.

Planning Activities in which The Process Leads to the Repetition of Particular Language

This is especially helpful in the early stages of development. Repetition gives the learner the opportunity to take part in the activity and practise and consolidate specific language in meaningful contexts. Making specific reference to particular vocabulary and phrases at the beginning of an activity helps clarify meaning, e.g. jigsaw words, exchanging information (likes and dislikes), teaching something to another child, delivering messages to other children/teacher/ administration staff, activities which establish appropriate speaking and listening courtesies, oral retell of stories and story maps, turn-taking games etc.

Planning for Time to Reflect

It is very useful to build in time for learners to talk about the activity after they have completed it, as well as during it. This demands particular language skills and enables the teacher to help the learner extend his or her use of English and consider the next series of activities. Feedback helps the learner reflect on his or her language and learning and take an active part in planning for further development, e.g. teacher or student planned reflection in pairs; small groups, self-evaluation to peers of activity/learning carried out, sharing individual work with teacher, parent or another student, activity maths, circle sharing, recounting experiences, describing and explaining, swapping stories and jokes, speaking and listening corner etc. Some students may work on the activity in their home language and then report back to the class or teacher in English.

Planning for Continuity

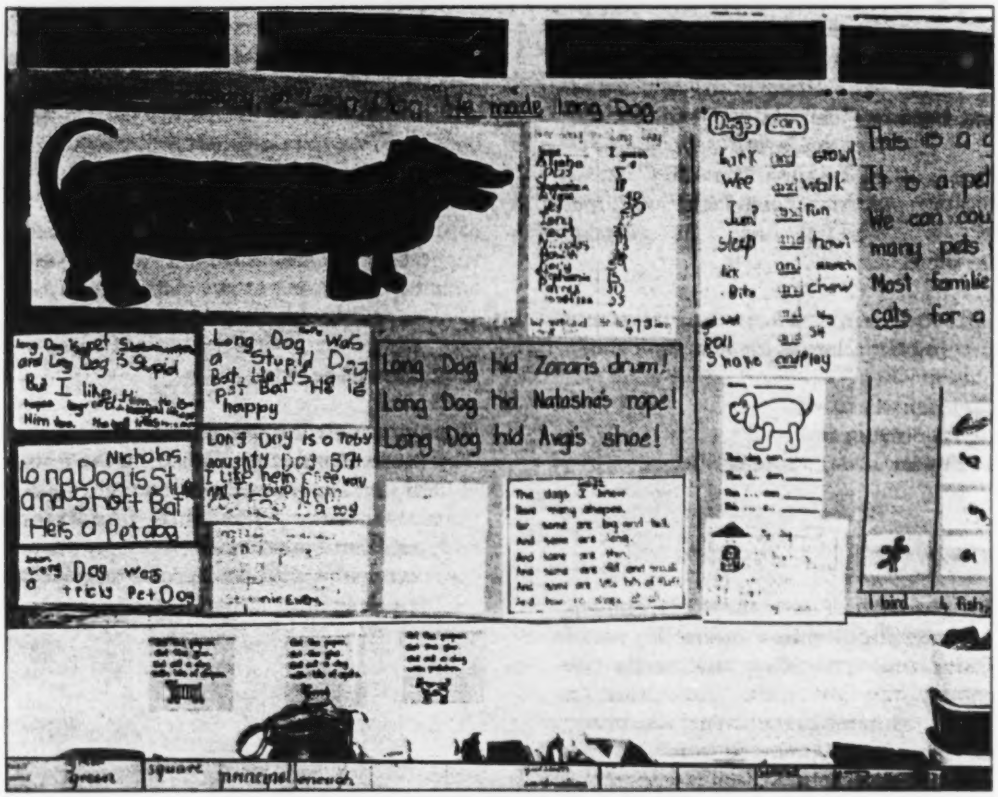
Exploring a particular theme or concept through a number of activities enables the learner to consolidate and extend particular types of language in a range of contexts and through a number of different curriculum areas. Projects allow individual interpretation and independent learning within a shared context, e.g. teacher-planned activities for modelling particular communication skills - taking turns etc.

Planning a Supportive Environment

The classroom environment can provide another means of supporting second language development if it is designed to enable children to manage their own learning. Through the use of audiotapes, computers, literacy corners and structured play areas, to name but a few, learners can work at their own level and at their own pace. It is important that print is strategically placed around the room so that it may be accessed easily, i.e. place print at an appropriate height. When working on a particular theme, for example, Birds - place any books brought into the classroom around the birds display so the children can locate the books easily.

Planning for Diversity

Part of becoming competent in a second language involves recognition of the cultural conventions that are embedded in that language. Learners need opportunities to explore the differences between English and their home languages and consider the way in which these conventions influence interaction in different contexts.


We made Long Dog
Dogs can
bark and growl
Long Dog hid Zorari's drum!
Long Dog hid Natasha's rope!
Long Dog hid Avgi's shoe!
Long Dog is a naughty Dog
Nicholas
Long Dog is Stu and Short But He's a Pet dog
Long Dog was a tricky Pet Dog
Most familie
bird
fish
square
principal
enough

THE TEACHER'S USE OF ENGLISH

The teacher's use of English has a significant impact on the learner's development of English as a second language. Judging what is appropriate and when, should be based on knowledge of the children's level of understanding and individual needs. Building a language profile through interaction, observation, notes and work samples can help teachers make accurate judgements about development.

Being Systematic

In the early stages of development it is important to enable learners to hear and use particular phrases, in a range of contexts, from a number of sources. Very often children will 'pick-up' particular phrases and use them as a means of 'getting started' and 'joining in' other children's talk. Monitoring your own use of language becomes central to enabling the learner to use and make sense of the new language. The balance between using particular phrases 'consciously' and sounding 'natural' is a delicate one. Supportive strategies include:

- **identifying and, where appropriate, modifying language to be used in specific activities;**
- **being consistent;**
- **using repetition; and**
- **checking for understanding.**

Being Supportive

There are a number of ways in which teachers can encourage children to use English, while at the same time providing models for the learner to try out. Giving the learner time to contribute, encouraging repetition, prompting, rephrasing and praising are some of the strategies that appear to be facilitative. With older children it may be possible to talk about specific aspects of English and make comparisons between English and the learner's home language. Learners can be encouraged to use particular strategies to help development, such as asking for clarification, translation etc.

Being Continuous

As the learner becomes more proficient in English it is important to continue to give support, particularly in relation to curriculum areas, where some terms and vocabulary are specific to the subject. Cummins (1984) suggests that it takes up to three years for young children to become proficient in conversational skills, but it may take up to seven years for children to acquire 'academic' language.

Being Aware of Possible Difficulties

To help the learner to become competent it is important to identify areas which may cause some difficulty in relation to structure, pronunciation and intonation. Listening to the language choices children make to construct meaning, as well as listening to the message, enables the teacher to identify difficulties as well as development. Some difficulties may need specific attention to ensure they do not become permanent. The timing of the method of intervention is very important. Research suggests that learners are only able to acquire what they are ready to at a given time.

Being Sensitive

Finally, however fluent children become in their second language, if this is at the expense of their first language, their loss will be greater than their gain. Thus, it is important to support simultaneous development within a context which values and promotes diversity, while fighting discrimination.

SECTION IV

Supporting Language and Literacy Development in ESL Learners

- The Social Construction of Literacy
- Creating a Context to Support Diversity
- Key Features in Supporting Language and Literacy Development
- Recognition of Cultural Values and Practices
- Monitoring and Assessing Development

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LITERACY

Introduction

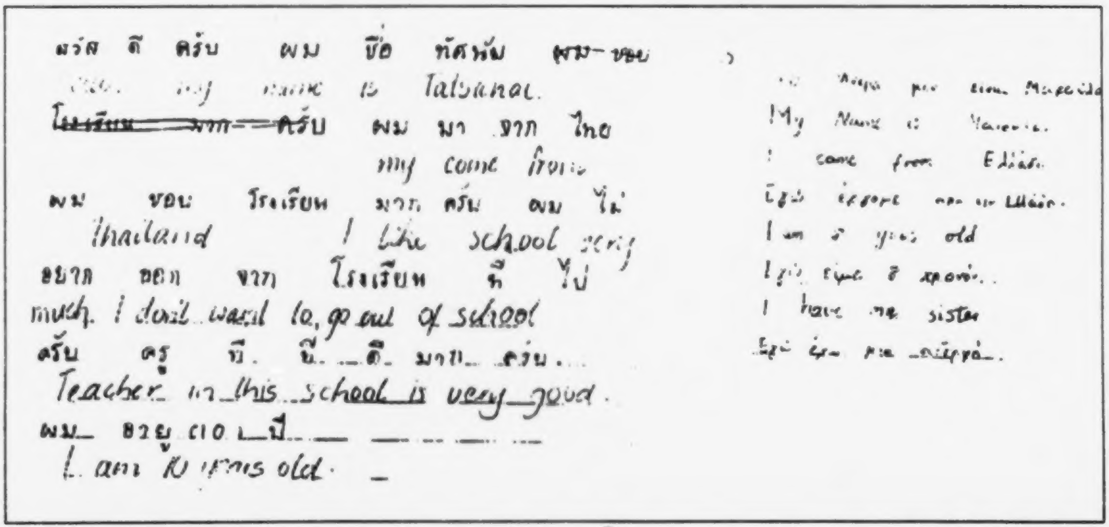
The approach to literacy development taken by First Steps is based on a holistic view of learning. It is argued that the four modes of language are interrelated and that children become literate through meaningful interaction in specific contexts. Thus, literacy is seen as a language process which begins long before children come to school. Children are becoming literate through their everyday interactions and experiences at home and in the wider community. The literacy 'events' that children are involved in and the way in which these are 'done', e.g. story reading, reading religious texts, choosing videos, making shopping lists etc., construct for children a view of 'what counts' as literacy.

If this view is accepted, then literacy is seen as a social phenomenon which is embedded in cultural norms and values. Clearly, the understandings children bring to school about how text is constructed and what it is used for will differ according to their cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. Thus, the context in which children are becoming literate will influence the way in which they approach reading and writing in school.

Children who do not speak English as their first language may have a wide range of competencies in other languages. As well as speaking other languages, some children may be becoming literate in their community language. They may be constructing meaning through numerical, pictorial or scriptural representation at a number of different levels. Their writing may range from marks on a page to sophisticated text construction. Their reading may range from a 'beginning' understanding of concepts of print to reading complex text.

If the learner's understanding and use of literacy is seen as central to development, clearly it is important to build on the range of skills that children bring to school. For teachers who do not share the learners' community languages, the task may seem daunting. However, to deny the learner's expertise may actually make the process of becoming literate very difficult and for some children the development of literacy in English may be at the expense of literacy in their community language.

- What do you know about the literacy [illegible] of your [illegible] in the [illegible] community?
- What information do you have about the language(s) spoken and written by the children in your class?
- Where can you get information and resources to help establish a multilingual context?


สวัส ดี ครับ ผม ชื่อ ทัศนัย (ผม-ชอบ
[illegible] my name is Tatsanai.
~~โรงเรียน มาก~~ ครับ ผม มา จาก ไทย
my come from
ผม ชอบ โรงเรียน มาก ครับ ผม ไม่
Thailand I like school very
อยาก ออก จาก โรงเรียน นี้ ไม่
much. I don't want to go out of school
ครับ ครู ที่ นี่ ดี มาก ครับ
Teacher in this school is very good.
ผม อายุ 10 ปี
I am 10 years old.

[illegible] μου είναι Μαρκέλλα
My Name is Marcella.
I came from Ellada.
Εγώ έρχομαι από την Ελλάδα.
I am 8 years old
Εγώ είμαι 8 χρονών.
I have one sister
Εγώ έχω μια αδερφή.

CREATING A CONTEXT TO SUPPORT DIVERSITY

A Supportive Environment

In order to build on and extend children's knowledge and literacy experiences, it is important that the classroom context reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of both individual children and the wider community. This is equally important in classrooms where all the children are monolingual. Recognising diversity through print raises the status and value of community languages and extends the children's experience of language.

A print-rich environment includes different forms of print in a range of languages from a variety of sources. The joint construction of the classroom environment by the children and the teacher ensures that print is contextualised and therefore meaningful. As children interact with print in a number of different ways, the environment becomes a resource which supports independent learning and enables children to work at their own level. In addition to this, as children display, develop and discuss aspects of their reading and writing, they are able to:

- demonstrate and develop their skills in reading and writing in their home language and English;
- build on their own and others' knowledge of what writing is and what can be done through writing;
- develop an understanding of a range of different scripts and meanings;
- recognise the similarities and differences by comparing various scripts both visually (by looking) and orally (by reading);
- share and experiment with a range of different scripts; and
- use language in a variety of contexts across the curriculum.

- Does the classroom context reflect the diversity of languages used by the children?
- Does the classroom context reflect the diversity of languages used by the wider community?
- How can you [illegible] to [illegible] support?
- How can you involve the children, colleagues and the community in creating a multilingual environment?

Opportunities to Create Text in Community Languages and English

All children need a variety of opportunities to construct text for different purposes and audiences. Encouraging children to write and read in their first languages enables them to:

- experience success and continue to value the languages they bring to school;
- demonstrate their skill and 'expertise' in a language other than English;
- use their home languages for learning as well as social communication;
- share their skills with their peers thereby raising the status of their home languages; and
- help their peers to become aware of other languages.

- **How can you create a context in which children feel confident to write and read in their community languages?**
- **How can you incorporate the children's languages into the curriculum?**
- **How can you encourage the children to learn from each other about different languages?**
- **How can you challenge negative attitudes from children, colleagues and parents about linguistic diversity?**

KEY FEATURES IN SUPPORTING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Research suggests that learners can successfully begin to develop reading and writing long before they have mastered the phonological, syntactic and semantic systems of spoken English. Reading and writing in meaningful contexts have been found to enhance spoken English. In addition to this, development in the learner's home language has also been found to have a positive effect on the development of second language literacy. The following features have been identified as particularly important in the development of English as a second language. Each one contributes to the development of the three cueing systems; i.e. semantic, syntactic and graphophonic.

Integration of the Four Modes of Language

By integrating speaking, listening, reading and writing through meaningful activities, children are able to make connections and build on their developing competency, as each area complements and reinforces the other. For example, discussion before reading introduces the learner to new vocabulary and language structures. ESL learners can then use shared reading as a basis for writing and their own writing as a basis for extending reading. Further collaboration and conferencing feeds back into the four language modes as a number of representations of the text are developed, e.g. charts, diagrams, graphs, guess who/where/when/why descriptions etc. These activities enable the learners to consolidate and build on what they know within a structured framework. Clearly, this has implications for creating a 'whole language' context rather than dividing learning into discrete curriculum areas.

By developing a theme or topic, children are able to hear and use language arising from related activities, for different purposes and audiences in a range of contexts. This helps them to gain confidence in using English and their community languages, thereby consolidating and extending learning.

An integrated program can also maximise the use of resources from the school and community.

If a support teacher is available, an integrated program enables the support teacher to:

- plan programs of work with the classroom teacher which he or she helps to implement within the classroom, minimising disruption and feelings of exclusion for both children and some support teachers who may be working in isolation from the rest of the class;
- ensure continuity by working on a theme or topic, while supporting particular aspects of language development; and
- swap roles with the classroom teacher. If time allows it may be useful for the teacher to work with particular children while the support teacher manages the rest of the class.

Supporting Reading, Writing and Spelling through Talk

Initially ESL learners' oracy often forms the basis of reading and writing. Talking enables the learner to become familiar with different types of text and begin to predict the sort of vocabulary and content words that may occur together, before the reading begins. Talk as a precursor to writing acts as a draft and helps the ESL learner to rehearse meaning and structure before writing. Talk helps the learner to focus on particular aspects of reading and writing in a meaningful context. This enables the ESL learner to:

- make connections between spoken and written English;
- hear and see models of English;
- clarify ideas and organise his or her writing, to ensure that writing is meaningful rather than 'reproductive' with little understanding;
- develop 'meta-linguistic' awareness. Reflecting upon language enables children to become aware of the structure, function and meaning of language; and
- develop strategies for supporting reading and writing, e.g. word attack skills; sight vocabulary; phonology. Through discussion and conferencing children can be encouraged to use word banks, dictionaries, the library, computers, story maps, environmental print, picture clues, tapes and other children etc. All these strategies will help children to become independent learners.

However, it must be added that initially some learners, especially older children, may not want or need to talk about their writing. They may find the demands of talk (to produce an immediate response) greater than those of producing a piece of writing. When children are writing they have more time to compose their thoughts and express their ideas.

In addition to this, contexts in which talking, reading and writing are an integral and 'natural' part of the activity, for example in structured play, enable the ESL learner to:

- choose which language seems most appropriate to talk, read and write in, while developing code switching skills;
- jointly construct meaning through interaction with other children, ensuring that reading and writing evolve from talk;
- write for specific purposes and audiences, ensuring that writing is meaningful;
- write from his or her own experience;
- write at his or her own level without the pressure of more formal situations, giving room for experimentation and collaboration, while learning from other children;
- see and hear English being used for specific purposes in highly contextualised situations. This gives the learner a framework on which to build and the opportunity to try out and practise new structures;
- choose from a range of materials and tools for reading and writing; and
- demonstrate his or her level of understanding and skills.

Supporting Reading and Writing through Modelling

Modelling is an essential part of supporting ESL learners and provides a scaffold through which ESL learners can extend their current level of competency. Modelling both reading and writing provides the learner with a structure on which to base independent work through access to a variety of examples and purposes for reading and writing. For example, shared books which make use of repeated phrases, refrains and rhymes enable the ESL learner to:

- become involved immediately, because of the repetition and easily predictable sequences;
- gain understanding through the repetition of simple sentence patterns and link to illustrations;
- add to his or her current level of linguistic competence, through practising new patterns;
- develop understanding of the structure and function of a particular genre; and
- use the model as a basis for producing particular written patterns and innovating on text.

Opportunities to Produce Text in Different Ways

In the early stages of developing English as a second language, some children may become so absorbed in the mechanics of writing that meaning is limited or lost. By reducing the cognitive demands required by handwriting and spelling, children can concentrate on creating meaning. Depending on the age and experience of the learner, there are a number of ways in which this can be done.

Collaborative Group Work

This enables children to work together and contribute at their own level. Each learner may have a different role, e.g. scribe, illustrator, proofreader etc. This allows all children to be involved, making writing a positive and non-threatening experience as they build on each understanding. Group dynamics also need to be considered when planning collaborative work.

Using Formulas

Very often in speech and writing children will 'tune into' particular structures of language. Initially, these are usually phrases in common use around the classroom. Children will use these in a variety of contexts and begin to replace specific elements. This gives them a feeling of success and confidence as well as a basis on which to extend their repertoire.

Retellings and Recounts

These provide the children with a 'given' structure which supports writing because the structure and content are less demanding than other forms of writing. The writing is based on language which is familiar to the children and which they have had practise at using.

Technical Support

For example:

tape recording of text to be written later;
word processing;
writing centres;
different scribes (teacher, peers, parent);
concept keyboard.

Extending Reading and Writing

As children become more competent in reading and writing in English, it is important to continue to support their development in structured and explicit ways. Enabling them to move from personal to more formal uses of reading and writing gives them access to increasingly complex 'academic uses' of language.

RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL VALUES AND PRACTICES

Shared background knowledge is an important factor in the interpretation of text. It is important to provide and use reading material which reflects the learner's cultural experience and knowledge of how literacy is practised in the home and community. New material needs to be explored not only in terms of content but also in terms of form and sequence.

It is important to consider whether there are any 'key classroom practices' that may conflict with the learner's understanding and expectations of reading and writing.

If possible, it is helpful to discuss cultural values and practices with children and parents, to avoid conflict and jointly create the classroom context. This also avoids stereotyping and misunderstanding about what children and parents feel is appropriate, as this will vary in and across cultures.

Clearly this is not an easy task, especially if children are from a range of different cultural backgrounds and if some of the cultural 'norms' conflict with your own. However, it may be useful to consider the following questions:

Are some topics unacceptable for children to talk, read and write about?

Example: Some parents may feel it is not acceptable for their children to be involved in particular celebrations (Jehovah's Witnesses).

Do some religious texts have to be presented and read in particular way?

Example: The Koran must be handled with utmost respect.

Are some reading and writing practices related to gender?

Example: Some parents may feel that boys are expected to be more educated and the girls more domesticated.

Does the structure of genres differ in different languages? Does the logical structure and presentation of information differ in different languages?

Example: Some children may present work which may seem jumbled and confused but they are actually transferring knowledge from their first language structure.

Are some of the practices used in a 'whole-language' approach to learning inappropriate?

Example: Some children may not feel comfortable with the notion of 'risk taking' and find practices such as 'invented spelling' difficult. Initially, they may prefer to ensure what they write is 'correct'.

How do you confirm the value of those cultures which are not 'print'-oriented?

Example: Model the oral telling of stories, illustrating the story while going along, e.g. drawing on a blackboard, drawing with a stick on the ground, making a tape of the story, making collections of oral stories on tape etc.

Awareness of the Learner's Home Language

Reading and writing are clearly complex skills that are embedded in cultural values, but given the opportunity, children who are literate in their first language will transfer their knowledge of reading and writing to their second language. However, there may be children who need extra support in developing particular aspects of English.

Research has shown that understanding particular concepts about print is important to the development of reading and writing in English. In texts written in English these concepts include recognition that:

- print conveys meaning and is different from pictures;
- there is a connection between the spoken and the written word;
- print runs from left to right and down the page;
- the left page precedes the right page;
- writing obeys particular grammatical rules (syntactic awareness);
- sentences are made up of words (word awareness); and
- words are make up of sounds (phonological awareness).

Where English conventions of print differ from the learner's first language, this may not pose major difficulties, as children soon learn to distinguish between the two languages. However, when the written system is constructed in a completely different way from English, some children may have specific difficulties. This may be particularly noticeable in languages that are not based on an alphabetic system, e.g. Japanese or Mandarin. These languages are based on an ideographic system, in which a character symbolises the idea of a thing without expressing the sequence of sounds in its name. The English language is based on an alphabetic system, in which the 26 letters of the alphabet are combined to produce 44 or so phonemes.

Importance of Children's Attitudes

Children's attitudes towards each other are central to developing a positive view of other languages and cultures. This is reflected in the way in which children interact with each other in both formal and informal situations.

Children can learn about different cultures and languages from each other. The success of collaborative work depends upon the children's willingness to share, listen and respond to each other. The teacher's commitment to the recognition of diversity is crucial to genuine collaboration and an exchange of ideas. This includes recognition of the need to counter negative attitudes and work with parents as well as children in creating a positive context.

Topics on 'language' can be developed to enable children to explore the nature and make-up of different languages in depth. Topics dealing with difficult issues can also help to challenge racism and affirm diversity, e.g. one school confronted children's verbal abuse in the playground by doing an extended project on 'Name Calling'. This involved all children and took the emphasis off 'individual silliness' and demonstrated the seriousness with which this kind of behaviour was viewed. This led to work on language in literature and the media which developed from an exploration of stereotyping through language and illustrations.

Phonological Awareness

In English, phonological awareness is thought to be an important part of developing reading and writing. The ability to break words into sounds helps children to read and spell new words. For children who are unfamiliar with a phonetic system, recognising the relationship between sounds and letters may be a very difficult task.

There are a number of ways of developing grammatical, phonological and word awareness through meaningful and contextually appropriate activities.

- Using a musical instrument or clapping hands once for each word in a sentence or rhyme as part of a musical activity.
- Singing simple rhymes. This helps children focus on individual words by replacing rhyming words with other rhyming words, in a story telling or music session.
- Introducing rhymes that help children focus on sound-symbol relationships.
- Playing games such as 'I Spy' to help focus on initial sounds.
- Making class books that repeat the rhyming and alliteration patterns of shared books.
- Creating a collage or classroom display of food labels that begin with the same letter, e.g. bread, beans, butter, burfi, bonbonniere, etc.
- Using computer programs and concept keyboards.

Spelling

For those children who are not accustomed to the English phonological system, hearing and distinguishing between the sounds to make phonetic approximations may be difficult. For these children, helping them to recognise the visual patterns in words will assist spelling development.

Focus on Form

Paying attention to the surface features of writing can be very helpful when done in a meaningful way. As the ESL learner becomes more competent, structural aspects of his or her writing can be explored both indirectly and directly. Through conferencing, learners can focus on the way in which particular forms can help writing to become more cohesive, e.g. conjunctions, substitutions, tense and lexical agreements, making sentences shorter etc. In addition, specific activities can also be used to help develop understanding and use of particular forms.

Importance of Time

It is very important to give children time to make sense of the new classroom context and new language. Children who are learning English as a second language need time to become familiar with the forms, patterns and functions of English. They need opportunities to consolidate and reinforce learning in a number of different ways, working at their own pace. Working in a second language places high cognitive demands on the learner; thus, time is needed to process and use new information without pressure to produce 'finished' products or respond instantly.

Thus, it helps if learning is not divided into short time chunks and children are able to:

- design and manage their writing and reading, e.g. writing corner, structured play;
- discuss their work;
- work at their own pace;
- return to their work; and
- collaborate with their peers.

MONITORING AND ASSESSING DEVELOPMENT

Taking Account of Community Languages

Children who are learning English as a second language may be becoming literate in other languages. To get a true picture of the learner's communicative competence, it is necessary to take all languages into account. Recognising the skills children have in their community languages brings a new dimension to evaluation and planning. There are a number of ways to build up a profile of development:

- Collect samples of work over time to identify changes.
- Talk to children in English about their writing and reading.
- Observe their behaviour before, during and after reading and writing activities when possible.
- Translate writing into English.
- Talk with their peers (in the early stages of development).
- Try to get outside help, e.g. bilingual assistant, parents.

Using Languages Interchangeably

Even in the early stages of development, many children are able to move from one language to another. In both speaking and writing, children seem to 'code mix' for a variety of reasons:

- To make the meaning clearer. Not all concepts are transferable and children will chose the most appropriate word or words, for example:
  I got guthi for hapy birtdy.
  (guthi - a special money bag made out of material).
- To use language in a more effective and efficient way.
- To overcome frustration due to lack of vocabulary.
- To express particular content more easily. Even children who are fluent in English may find some topics easier to talk and write about in their community language.
- To take account of the audience, e.g. if the audience shares the same language and culture, it may be more appropriate to write in the community language.

Code switching and mixing can be looked upon as deliberate choices rather than mistakes or confusion, indicating a sophisticated use of language. They also give the teacher and the children the opportunity to discuss particular aspects of languages, developing further meta-linguistic awareness.

Language Transfer

It is very useful to have some knowledge of the learner's home/community language. This enables identification of aspects of English development that have been transferred from the learner's other languages. This transfer may include pronunciation, grammatical structure, vocabulary and semantics and occur in talking, reading and writing.

These examples suggest that the learners are attempting to make meaning by using a range of strategies derived from more than one language. Through interaction and observation the teacher sees the children as creatively constructing meaning rather than making mistakes. With support, the learners will gradually begin to distinguish between the languages.

Sharing Assessment

The context in which children are using language affects the choices they make about language. Thus, assessment needs to take account of context and content and differentiate between form and function to accurately judge what the learner is able to do with language. In doing this, the teacher is able to make decisions about what is needed and how this can best be done.

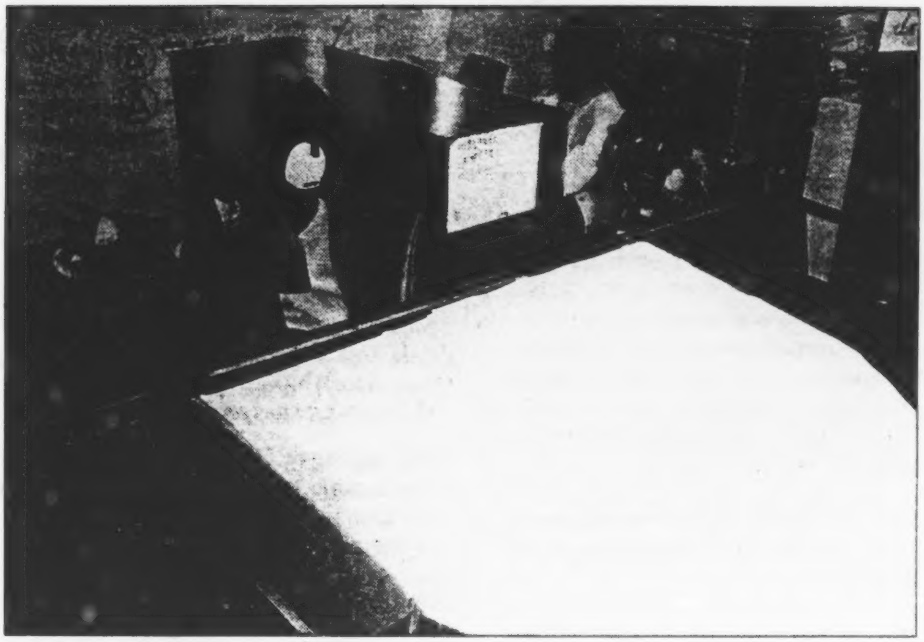
Involving child and parent can give great insight, especially in relation to the learner's community language. It is very important to discuss development with the learner as this provides a joint picture and gives the learner feedback.

Teacher Intervention

Continual, ongoing assessment enables the teacher to judge what type of intervention is appropriate and when this is going to be most effective. In addition to the ongoing help and support that is part of a 'whole-language' approach to learning, there may be times when it is appropriate to identify specific difficulties and focus upon these. Modelling is a useful strategy as it enables the teacher to focus on certain aspects of writing and reading while taking the pressure off the individual.

SECTION V

A Preliminary Report on the Oral Language Learning Continuum



- Introduction
- Assessing Oral Language Development
- Oral Language Learning Continuum Recording Sheets
    Oral Sharing
    Discussion
    Social Conventions
    Newstelling
    Narrative
    Description
    Partner Work
    Inquiry
    Classification

ORAL LANGUAGE LEARNING CONTINUUM

Introduction

The First Steps Oral Language Developmental Continuum describes oral language development within a classroom context. Each phase includes behaviours linked to language of social interaction, literacy-related language and language and thinking.

Teachers from Highgate have generally found the indicators on the Oral Language Developmental Continuum too general for students learning English as a second language. While the developmental phases are useful in describing the breadth and challenges of classroom-related language, a Learning Continuum provides more information for focusing on specific classroom language forms.

Oral Language Learning Continuum

The Learning Continuum on pages 76 - 93 traces the development of some of the more common functions of oral language found in classrooms. It must be remembered that the children's responses are a result of the tasks, the type of interaction and the learners involved in the talk. Responses will vary according to these dimensions.

Each of the following areas relates to a different purpose for using language in a school setting:

Oral Sharing - reporting on an interactive activity or task

Discussion - sharing ideas and opinions

Social Conventions - using appropriate languages and behaviours in a particular context given that conventions may differ according to cultural norms

Newstelling - giving an account of what happened

Narrative - using the language of storytelling

Description - creating a verbal picture

Partner Work - interactive learning

Inquiry - questioning to gain or clarify information

Classification - organising information

Scope of Learning Continuum

The Learning Continuum indicators are not a definite or prescriptive list of essential behaviours but rather a general description of bilingual children's developing control in a range of forms. Teachers trialing the introduction and evaluation of the forms have included examples of speech and behaviours observed as children were introduced to, and became more familiar with each area. There is an emphasis on listing criteria that relate to oral rather than written language. For example, there is no expectation that sentences will be pre-planned, well-formed and always coherent for the listener. The descriptions highlight 'language on the run' where the children's thoughts are being shaped at the moment of utterance. Thus it is expected that the communication will reflect generalisations from the first language, an abundance of non-verbal behaviours, and 'fillers' (*um, ah*), hesitations and backtracking.

It is important to note that children are not expected to progress in a linear sequence. They will reach plateaus and regress as do native English speaking children, and the surface features they produce will vary according to the cognitive demands of the task. In addition, use of non-standard English may reflect a particular linguistic community rather than incorrect English.

Teachers may find the Learning Continuum evaluation formats useful for tracking children's developing control in one or more of the nine listed areas. It should be noted, however, that these are not the only forms that children need to control in order to participate effectively at school or in the community. It is also important to acknowledge that each culture has its own purposes for using language and therefore its own genres. Some of the examples of language forms outlined on the following pages may be unfamiliar to children from other cultures and there is a possibility of cultural bias in the indicators. For example, some indicators describe culture-specific behaviours such as maintaining eye contact, answering questions or challenging another's point of view. Teachers will need to make their own judgments about the indicators and adapt or delete them according to the children's cultural backgrounds and the classroom context.

ASSESSING ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

By observing children using oral language in all areas of the curriculum, teachers can gather evidence of bilingual children's knowledge and understanding, their approaches to learning, their reasoning and analytical skills *as well as* their developing control of English. For many bilingual children oral assessment gives a more accurate picture of their knowledge and understanding than assessment based on reading and writing activities. Making judgments through observation of oral language usage is especially significant for those students whose conceptual development may not be reflected in their written work. It is important to remember that:

- in the early stages of development the children's level of English may not reflect their cognitive understanding;

- form and function do not develop simultaneously; i.e. learners can often use a limited number of forms to convey a range of functions;

- the language children produce is based on external as well as internal factors, e.g. the form and content of the talk is influenced by the context and other speakers as well as the child's knowledge of English; and

- children in the early stages of development often use learned chunks of English to enable them to participate in classroom life. As these chunks become broken down and incorporated into 'creative constructions' the learner's language appears to regress. In fact the learner is combining and extending what she/he already knows.

Principles to consider when making judgments about oral language development

- Bilingual children have already developed an ability to use their first language for a range of communicative, social and cognitive tasks.

- Children will develop a second language most effectively in an environment which acknowledges and builds on the strengths of the first language and level of cognitive development.

- Children's use of English language may be affected by features not necessarily related to their oral skills. These include:

    - the response of the listener or nature of the audience, e.g. a new teacher or unfamiliar group of children;
    - the cognitive demands of the task, e.g. complex verbal instructions for a relatively simple task;
    - the cultural and social demands of the task;
    - the motivation or responsibility for the task, e.g. a more competent speaker taking control or interpreting for the child;
    - the background knowledge of the subject or task, e.g. the child may be grappling with both the concepts and language of the subject;
    - the number of 'same-language' children in the group, e.g. the children may be given opportunities to develop concepts in their first language through peer interaction before attempting to demonstrate their understandings in English;
    - the social situation or grouping, e.g. activity-based, child-centred approach or teacher-dominated groupings; and
    - familiarity with the new classroom learning environment, e.g. the children may be unfamiliar with a classroom environment which encourages talk and interaction.

Effective assessment should record what children can do rather than identify what they fail to do. Teachers of bilingual students will be noting their developing control of English, focusing initially on their ability to communicate meaning rather than grammatical or lexical features.

Oral assessment should describe children engaged in a range of classroom contexts, over time, not focus on activities devised specifically for assessment purposes. Data gathered about oral language should inform teachers about the quality of children's learning across the curriculum as well as their attainment in speaking and listening.

What can be assessed as children develop control of English?

Initially, assessment of speaking and listening may be based on very limited evidence, e.g. what the child may say or do in response to speech. In the early stages of second-language acquisition 'receptive' English (what children understand) will almost always be ahead of 'productive' language (what they can say). As children become more confident and competent with English, it is important to begin looking at the scope of language used. For example, children who are fluent in 'everyday' English may have limited control of more formal classroom language, the language of literacy or subject-specific language.

An accurate profile of oral language development should include evaluation across a range of informal and formal contexts and groupings, assessment *of* talk (features of speaking and listening such as appropriateness, diction, syntax, clarity, responsiveness) and assessment *through* talk (understandings or knowledge demonstrated through talking). A profile should also differentiate between what the learner can do with English (the functions) and how these meanings are produced (the forms), as well as taking into account non-standard forms which may be related to a particular dialect of English.

Assessment might include:

- how learners use English to communicate;
- how learners use English or their first language to achieve understanding;
- how learners respond to the communication of others;
- what learners understand and know about how language works;
- what learners know and understand about the curriculum and the level at which they can express understandings in English;
- how effectively learners use the features of the English language; and
- what learners know about the content of the curriculum as displayed through talk.

Using the First Steps Oral Language Learning Continuum

Before assessing developing use of a form, ensure that students have been immersed in the language of the form and given many opportunities to practise and refine each of the elements. For example, the language of narrative may be developed through activities such as literature readings, storytelling, story maps, puppet plays, videos and group story reconstructions. As children become more familiar with the language and structure of narrative, teachers can begin to observe and map developing literacy behaviours. This approach will provide a process for highlighting strengths, noting areas that need attention and selecting appropriate activities to promote further skills.

Note: This version of the Learning Continuum is designed for second-language learners. Children for whom English is a first language can be evaluated using the First Steps Oral Language Developmental Continuum or the standard version of the Learning Continuum outlined in the *First Steps Oral Language Resource Book* (Longman Cheshire, 1994).

Oral Language

Learning Continuum

Recording Sheets

- Oral Sharing
- Discussion
- Social Conventions
- Newstelling
- Narrative
- Description
- Partner Work
- Inquiry
- Classification

ORAL SHARING

INTRODUCTION

Meaningful sharing sessions challenge children to express their opinions, to think, make hypotheses, speculate, draw conclusions, question, make comparisons, explain, listen to, and respond to others. Through talking and listening children can test their understandings and make modifications to their thinking and knowledge.

Curriculum-related programs which involve a range of audiences and purposes for speaking enable children to learn vocabulary and language styles in contexts that are diverse yet meaningful to them.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- make an introductory statement about the item or topic being shared?
- provide an outline of the goal or purpose of the activity?
- describe or explain features of the activity?
- include steps involved in completing the task or activity?
- explain planning and decisions made?
- describe problems encountered and solutions reached?
- add specific comments about the task, e.g. similarity to previous activities?
- reflect on the product and process, e.g. comments on what was completed and what was learned?

NAME: ______________________

YEAR: ______________________

References

- *Language of Social Interaction*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria and a summary o classroom communication skills.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

  The continuum enables teachers to develop a profile of a child' oral language development over time. Language related to soci behaviours is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language Social Interaction.*

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
The child requires teacher support to begin to introduce information related to the activity or experience.	**The child provides a general description of the activity or experience with teacher support.**	**The child uses teacher facilitation to provide a description of an experience or explanation of a completed task.**	
Indicators of Behaviour			
Text Content and Organisation	**Text Content and Organisation**	**Text Content and Organisation**	
The child: • requires extensive teacher support to initiate any language related to the experience or task • sits/stands by the listener and appears to be listening • makes one or two-word statements, e.g. *Painting. My building.*	The child: • initiates a simple statement about the activity or item, e.g. *Make boat.* • relies on teacher prompts to extend the description, e.g. through questions or comments • follows a simple, practised presentation process, e.g. introduces an item	The child: • initiates a detailed description of the activity or item if framework has been taught, e.g. nature of task, and features of completed item • responds to teacher support in providing more detail or evaluative comments	
Vocabulary and Sentence Structure	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	
The child: • uses single words or uncompleted sentences • repeats phrases, makes false starts, includes hesitations • attempts to participate by using limited English	The child: • uses simple statements, e.g. *Make dinosaur.* • attempts to link ideas together, e.g. *Story map, bear.* • begins to incorporate general vocabulary, e.g. colour, size, shape • uses learned sentence patterns, e.g. *Once upon a time …* • uses *and* to link ideas together	The child: • uses more correct sentence structures with same connectors, e.g. *and, then* • uses specific vocabulary related to the experience or item, e.g. maths vocabulary when explaining a problem-solving task (vocabulary needs to be taught and some children may continue to confuse terminology)	

Indicators of Behaviour - ORAL SHARING

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgments about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**COMMENTS**
The child: • uses single words or uncompleted sentences • repeats phrases, makes false starts, includes hesitations • attempts to participate using English vocabulary and language structures	The child: • responds to teacher support when participating in sharing • responds to teacher prompts when extending description or explanation of task, e.g. *What else did you use?* (teacher prompts are very focused) • uses appropriate rate and volume when confident	The child: • is intent on completing the presentation • interacts with audience • reflects, plans and presents information in informal situations, e.g. small-group sharing • plans and presents information in a more formal situation with teacher support and modelling, e.g. inter-class presentations	
Responsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	
The child: • shows minimal response to the information provided • is inattentive or passive or both • interrupts with unrelated comments (possibly has no understanding of what the speaker is saying)	The child: • uses stereotypic comments or questions, e.g. *It nice. What you do?* • initiates general comments related to the task, e.g. *I make one too.* • shows an interest in the sharing session by making comments or questioning (may not be relevant)	The child: • shows some basic interaction with the speaker by following the description or explanation • responds by making comments or asking questions • may suggest solutions to problems encountered, e.g. *Next time you use big blocks.*	

Comments

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

Discussion involves interaction by small or large groups to reach a deeper understanding of topics. Speakers and listeners are involved in sharing ideas and opinions without necessarily reaching a consensus. Language is used to clarify thinking, gain new knowledge, and express ideas and opinions.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- reach mutual agreement on the nature of the task or topic?
- stay on task?
- interact independently without teacher assistance?
- interact positively and cooperatively?
- use language effectively to explore the topics, e.g. offering ideas, explaining points, questioning?
- use language effectively to coordinate the activity, e.g. encouraging, planning, instructing, summarising?

NAME: ____________________

YEAR: ____________________

References

- *Language of Social Interaction*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria and a summary of classroom communication skills.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

  The continuum enables teachers to develop a profile of a child's oral language development over time. Language related to social behaviours is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language of Social Interaction.*

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
The child requires teacher support to engage in simple conversational topics. These are usually teacher-directed but can be child-initiated.	**The child begins to engage in structured partner discussions that require teacher support to initiate and sustain topics.**	**The child interacts successfully in informal, small-group discussions. Teacher modelling continues to occur.**	
Indicators of Behaviour			
Text Content and Organisation	**Text Content and Organisation**	**Text Content and Organisation**	
The child: • relies on teacher support to introduce a topic • initiates little information • relies on teacher or adult prompting to maintain conversational interaction • adds simple comment to what is being said	The child: • relies on teacher direction to select a topic for discussion • initiates and sustains discussion on topics within his/her experience • needs teacher facilitation to move between role of speaker and listener	The child: • expresses opinions and understandings of a limited range of topics through conversation, discussion or argument • follows teacher modelling by using language to demonstrate different roles within a group, e.g. manager, reporter • needs teacher facilitation to extend the topic	
Vocabulary and Sentence Structure	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	
The child: • makes simple statements related to common experiences, classroom activities, concrete objects, etc. • repeats phrases, makes false starts, uses incomplete utterances, includes hesitations • uses limited vocabulary that may provide insufficient information for the listener • uses simple conjunctions, e.g. *and, then* • uses what he/she knows in order to participate and make meaning	The child: • makes general comments about a chosen topic, including information that has a common interest to the group, e.g. *Tell us why you did that*. • uses simple sentence structures, rephrases ideas, adds fillers, e.g. stands and looks up, *Um, ah, and then...* • begins to incorporate vocabulary that enables the listener to interpret the message • uses simple conjunctions, e.g. *and, then, but*	The child: • makes comments and expresses opinions about a range of classroom-initiated topics • uses extended sentences to express ideas and opinions • selects vocabulary to enhance ideas or opinions • uses conjunctions effectively, e.g. *next, so, because*	

Indicators of Behaviour - DISCUSSION

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore, it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgments about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**COMMENTS**
The child: • requires adult or peer support to sustain a conversation • uses non-verbal behaviours to support meaning • uses questioning to solve breakdowns in communication rather than as a technique to gain information related to the topic, e.g. *What you say?*	The child: • begins to clarify comments by rephrasing or repeating information (with teacher questioning and support) • responds to feedback from others by repeating or rephrasing information • adds further explanation after teacher questioning • adds comments of personal significance in response to others' information • begins to take turns, respond, listen, during interactions • begins to negotiate group roles (with teacher support) • begins to demand audience attention • begins to ask questions related to the topic	The child: • asks for and provides explanations or reasons • clarifies information by repeating, rephrasing or extending information • elaborates ideas and information in response to group questions or comments • takes turns using appropriate tone, volume and conventions • expands on others' ideas or comments • negotiates group roles and reaches consensus on nature of discussion or task • questions to clarify or obtain information	

Responsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**
The child: • shows a limited response to topics initiated by others • attempts to respond and join in using limited English if meaning is gained from discussion • questions through rising intonation, repetition of utterance or gesture	The child: • responds to the topic by initiating ideas or comments within his/her experience • responds, but comments may not be related to the topic • seeks clarification when something is not understood (not always from the speaker), e.g. *What he say?* • seeks rights as a listener, e.g. *Can't hear. What you say?*	The child: • listens actively by identifying and commenting on the topic • asks for further information or explanation to clarify arguments or ideas expressed by others • expresses ideas or opinions based on new information or ideas gained • interrupts and interacts appropriately in informal and formal group situations, e.g. doesn't raise hand until speaker is finished • seeks rights as a listener in an appropriate manner

Comments

SOCIAL CONVENTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The social and cultural group to which children belong has a significant effect on the way they communicate and behave. Children's backgrounds will determine the language (e.g. Italian, Greek, English) they speak, their attitude towards language use, the scope of experiences they have had, the variety of people with whom they have interacted, and the way in which they use language to construct and convey meaning.

In the classroom, the audience moves from child to child, child to children, child to teacher or child to adults. Bilingual children's ability to communicate in each of these situations will depend on their confidence, familiarity with the audience and opportunities they have had to develop appropriate language for a range of purposes. The context, demands of the task and other speakers will also influence their response.

The following indicators of language development refer to English usage within classroom contexts. It is also valuable to record information, home language, e.g. when, where and with whom it is used, as well as the purpose and its success as a tool for communication.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- respond appropriately in the classroom context to a range of social situations, e.g. greeting, asking permission, apologising?
- speak confidently in both informal and formal situations?
- modify his or her speaking style to suit both informal and formal situations?
- select conventional forms of speech for more formal situations?

NAME: ____________________

YEAR: ____________________

References

- *Language of Social Interaction*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria and a summary of classroom communication skills.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

  The continuum enables teachers to develop a profile of a child's oral language development over time. Language related to social behaviours is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language of Social Interaction.*

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
The child needs support to use social conventions considered appropriate for the classroom. Initially, the child's language may reflect the teacher's language and expectations.	**The child begins to demonstrate language and behaviours appropriate to a range of classroom situations.**	**The child demonstrates appropriate social conventions in informal situations and begins to use language in more formal contexts.**	
Indicators of Behaviour			
Text Content and Organisation	**Text Content and Organisation**	**Text Content and Organisation**	
The child: • may use a peer to interpret or communicate a message • needs extensive support to initiate conversation in English • sits/stands by the listener and appears to be tuning into the sounds, intonation and patterns of English	The child: • needs encouragement to initiate conversation in English • initiates simple responses, e.g. *Yes. No. Thank you.* • makes simple verbal or non-verbal requests, e.g. points or looks at items or activity. Child: *I want pencil.* • responds to teacher modelling, e.g. *May I have a pencil?*	The child: • includes simple classroom courtesies when communicating, e.g. *Excuse me. Would you like turn?* • in structured classroom activities, uses language patterns previously modelled by the teacher, e.g. language used during newstelling sessions • adapts language to suit informal or more formal situations, e.g. addressing adults or peers	

Vocabulary and Sentence Structure	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	
The child: • copies teacher or peers , e.g. *May I go to the toilet?* • may use one word to communicate • uses simple sentences when prompted, e.g. *I want ...* • begins to use greetings and farewells modelled by the teacher, e.g. *Good morning.* • repeats words to express appreciation, e.g. *Thank you.*	The child: • overgeneralises learned language patterns, e.g. *Lunch finish, Mrs Sinclair.* • begins to imitate conventions modelled in class, e.g. *Excuse me, Mrs ...Thank you for listening to my news.* • begins to use vocabulary that reflects classroom conventions, e.g. *Thank you. Sorry. Excuse me.* • begins to practise classroom conventions with peers • uses a limited number of forms to convey a range of functions	The child: • integrates appropriate language with situation, e.g. during a partner activity: *It your turn. Do you want play? Painting finish .* • uses some appropriate vocabulary to support or clarify the message, e.g. when greeting, asking permission, apologising	

Indicators of Behaviour - SOCIAL CONVENTIONS

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgement about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as a Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**COMMENTS**
The child: • uses non-verbal gestures to gain attention, e.g. tugs sleeve, interrupts or is unaware of accepted conventions to enter a conversation • relies on prompts to demonstrate social conventions, e.g. Teacher: *Peter gave you some crayons.* Teacher models response e.g. *Thank you, Peter.* • needs encouragement to communicate in English. • lacks confidence to express needs or wants, e.g. doesn't ask for assistance or permission • uses non-verbal behaviours to help express meaning, e.g. one word supported by pointing, pulling the listener's sleeve	The child: • uses a variety of verbal and non-verbal behaviours to gain attention, e.g. raises hand, *Excuse me ...* • requires frequent prompts and practice to respond appropriately in specific social situations, e.g. Teacher: *Karen, what should you remember when you're doing a partner activity?* Karen: *Quiet voice.* • needs encouragement to approach people outside class, e.g. other teachers, children • with encouragement, asks for assistance or permission	The child: • uses a variety of verbal and non-verbal behaviours, e.g. eye contact, varies volume, initiates simple conversation with teacher/peers • is aware of classroom courtesies appropriate to particular situations, e.g. uses polite terms to address adults, doesn't interrupt when a peer is telling class news, doesn't call out • shows increasing confidence when communicating with groups outside the classroom • shows increasing confidence in using a more formal language style taught or modelled by the teacher, e.g. when speaking at school assembly	
Responsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	
The child: • may have difficulty distinguishing between different teachers' pronunciations; i.e. may not respond to own name • may have little or no acknowledgment that someone has spoken to her/him in English • elicits responses that are non-verbal rather than verbal, e.g. when asked a question, points to the activity • has difficulty when asked to respond or interact, e.g. doesn't appear to be able to sustain a conversation, relay a message, answer a question	The child: • begins to acknowledge the speaker through eye contact, spoken response • begins to use verbal response rather than non-verbal responses • with support, makes simple responses to the speaker, e.g. *Beautiful! Lucky!*	The child: • acknowledges the speaker through eye contact, simple verbal responses and questions to gain further information • demonstrates established classroom courtesies, e.g. waits for speaker to finish talking, looks at speaker • shows a willingness to interact with a variety of audiences, e.g. teacher, peers • shows an interest in what has been said by commenting, questioning etc. • shows an increasing confidence during conversations	

NEWSTELLING

INTRODUCTION

Newstelling develops skills in planning and presenting the main elements of a recount - *when, who, where, what, why*. The activity provides opportunities to practise oral language skills related to initiation of topics, selecting and adapting information and monitoring the effectiveness of a more formal presentation. Newstelling also promotes critical listening and effective questioning skills.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- extend topics beyond immediate or recent past experiences, e.g. community news?
- consistently include key elements of a recount; i.e. *when, who, where, what*?
- provide appropriate elaboration and detail?
- introduce varied and subject-specific vocabulary?
- use evaluative comments, e.g. *It was interesting, exciting*?
- as a speaker, demonstrate increased awareness of the audience, e.g. entertains, includes humour, monitors listener reaction?
- as a speaker, respond to questions by offering evidence or clarifying information?
- as a listener, maintain appropriate social behaviours, e.g. no talking, looking at speaker?
- as a listener, initiate comments or questions?

NAME: ________________________

YEAR: ________________________

References

- *Literacy-related Skills*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria, rating scales and checklists to enable focused observation and evaluation of specific literacy-related behaviours.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

  The continuum enables teachers to develop a profile of a child's oral language development over time. Language related to literacy behaviours is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language and Literacy*.

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
The child needs teacher support to choose a topic. Concrete 'here and now' situations are based on child's own choice of item to show or recount of a recent memorable experience.	**The child uses a known range of topics - home, family, excursions, special outings. Teacher guidance and modelling of language structures is required.**	**The child extends language beyond immediate or recent past experiences. Predictions are made regarding possible outcomes of future events. The child expresses an awareness of the world beyond self.**	
Indicators of Behaviour			
Text Content and Organisation	**Text Content and Organisation**	**Text Content and Organisation**	
The child: • needs teacher support to introduce a topic • may nod or shake head following teacher prompting • needs extensive scaffolding, e.g. *Tell us when. Tell us whom, etc.* • may make a simple statement, e.g. *House*. The teacher then questions or prompts to elicit further information	The child: • introduces topics and needs teacher support to maintain the recount • states some referents, e.g. who, what, when • needs teacher support and modelling to incorporate all elements of the recount	The child: • introduces topics beyond 'here and now' • consistently includes key informational components after teacher modelling, e.g. when, who, where, what	
Vocabulary and Sentence Structure	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	
The child: • uses general descriptions, e.g. *Cat. Big. Fast.* • speaks in short simple sentences, e.g. *I have car. It big.*	The child: • uses simple descriptions, e.g. *Got ball. Big. Birthday.* • uses simple conjunctions, e.g. *and, then. We go zoo. We see animal. Then go home bus.*	The child: • introduces more varied and specific vocabulary: reflective verbs, e.g. *I think* adverbials - *quickly, nicely* conjunctions - *because, so, if,* adjectives - *large, enormous* • uses longer, more complex sentences	

Indicators of Behaviour - NEWSTELLING

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore, it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgement about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**COMMENTS**
The child: • is developing awareness that gesture, facial expression etc. may enhance the spoken message • is developing an awareness of expectations of audience and situation, e.g. speaking to a group of friends in activity time is different from speaking to the class during newstime, e.g. uses soft voice in front of large groups • may address the teacher rather than audience	The child: • exhibits signs of confidence, e.g. head kept high, eyes on audience, body relaxed (may not be confident to speak to whole group. Some cultural groups do not look at audience) • begins to use appropriate rate and volume • displays items appropriately • follows a newstime routine appropriately, e.g. *Good morning girls and boys ...* • relies on introduced news framework to support recount (see *Literacy-related Skills* module) • controls audience behaviours, e.g. *Fold your arms and listen ...* • responds appropriately to questions (information may be brief, e.g. *Yes. No. Red. Good.*)	The child: • adopts general mannerisms that signal composure and confidence, e.g. sweeping eye contact with audience member (depends on cultural background) • uses appropriate rate and volume • responds to and elaborates on questions (depends on cultural background) • uses appropriate resources to clarify and support message, e.g. points to parts of item being shown	
Responsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	
The child: • is inattentive or passive or both because of lack of visual clues to meaning • may display particular behaviour when meaning is lost, e.g. turns back, plays • interrupts with apparently unrelated comments in order to join in • answers a question with a statement	The child: • uses a particular bank of questions for confirmation, e.g. *Did you like it? What colour?* • interrupts with related comments, usually from personal experiences • maintains taught social courtesies when listening, e.g. no talking	The child: • initiates comments related to the topic • initiates simple questions to gain clarification or further information, e.g. *Where sheep go to sleep?* • brings in other information and relates it to similar events	

Comments

NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTION

Narrative can be described as a text in which stories are told. Its basic purpose is to entertain, inform or teach. Narrative texts include fairytales, mysteries, science fiction, fables, moral tales, myths and legends.

Conventional English story structure includes:

- an orientation - that sets the scene, introducing place, time and character
- a complication - that shapes the plot through character and action, building upon the orientation
- a resolution - that ties ends together in a satisfying conclusion

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- include elements of story structure; i.e. time, place, setting, characters, events?
- show the relationship between character motivations and events, e.g. character's attempts to solve a problem?
- include story conventions, e.g. conventional story beginning and ending?
- include storybook language, e.g. *All of a sudden ...*?
- use intonation and emphasis to add impact or interest to the story?
- offer predictions and evaluative comments as the story unfolds?
- demonstrate an understanding of key story inferences through story retelling or responses to questions?

NAME: ______________________

YEAR: ______________________

References

- *Literacy-related Skills*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria, rating scales and checklists to enable focused observation and evaluation of specific literacy-related behaviours.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum* •

  The continuum enables teachers to develop a profile of a child's oral language development over time. Language related to literacy behaviours is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language and Literacy.*

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
When telling a story the child focuses on concrete objects and actions. There may be little organisation or sequencing. Simple words and short phrases are used.	**The child relates a series of events that have the beginnings of narrative structure. Teacher support is required through prompts and questions.**	**The child tells a story that has a simple narrative structure, e.g. a problem, series of events and resolution. The text is produced after modelling and with some support from the teacher.**	
Indicators of Behaviour			
Text Content and Organisation	**Text Content and Organisation**	**Text Content and Organisation**	
The child: • makes one-word statements, e.g. *Dog. Hungry.* • offers a list of items or actions, e.g. *He run. House.*	The child: • uses language that comes from literature, e.g. *Trip, trap, trip, trap.* • makes simple statements, e.g. *I saw dog. He hungry.* • relates a series of events that have the beginnings of narrative structure, e.g. setting, characters, problem • has difficulty linking main idea and ending, e.g. *He go bridge.* • begins to integrate the sequence of events in correct order (with teacher prompting)	The child: • shows an awareness of narrative structure: setting, problem, sequence of events and concluding statement (still needs teacher prompting) • elaborates details to provide further information, e.g. character descriptions (with teacher modelling) • plans and produces oral narratives (with teacher assistance) • sequences events appropriately • supplies supporting detail (with teacher assistance) • begins to link character traits with motivation for behaviour, e.g. *The animal is lazy so Little Red Hen do all work* (simple but correct story structure).	

Vocabulary and Sentence Structure	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**COMMENTS**
The child: • omits conventional story beginnings and endings, such as, *Once upon a time* … • is developing simple conjunctions to link events, e.g. *And then* … • makes simple statements related to concrete objects and events when retelling or creating stories, e.g. *Goat. He hungry.*	The child: • begins to use simple adjectives from books, e.g. *big* to describe characters, objects and events in retells: *Three bears go woods. Big bear! He big.* • incorporates simple conjunctions to link ideas and events, e.g. and, then • confuses past and present tenses, singular and plurals, e.g. *Once there is three pig.* • begins to use direct speech (following modelling) • reproduces familiar storybook language	The child: • uses book language to extend ideas or events in retells of own stories • uses vocabulary related to narrative form, e.g. *Once upon a time …end* • uses direct speech, e.g. *And Little Hen say 'No! No! No!'* • reproduces book language to build excitement and audience reaction, e.g. *He go through door, then … Bang!* • begins to use a wider range of conjunctions, e.g. *So next…, Because…, And suddenly…*	

***Indicators of Behaviour* - NARRATIVE**

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore, it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgments about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	
The child: • makes statements that are usually directed to the teacher • shows increasing use of English to link events and retell of own story • has little awareness of audience needs • relies on teacher prompting or questioning to produce story information • repeats narrative text provided by teacher	The child: • begins to respond to audience reaction, e.g. faces audience • may use exaggerated gestures or volume in an attempt to support meaning • begins to be aware of, and respond to, audience needs • begins to respond to audience reaction, e.g. speech becomes more animated when audience laughs • needs teacher support to explain some elements of the story, e.g. character motivation • begins to show knowledge of sequencing, e.g. links some events together in retell or own story	The child: • uses expression and intonation to project characters or events in familiar stories • uses facial expressions, gestures, volume, etc to enhance the story • responds to audience reaction, e.g. uses more animated speech, waits for laughter to subside • incorporates literacy language to create a mood and develop character traits, e.g. *I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow house down.* • plans and presents a simple retell or own story following teacher modelling	
Responsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	
The child: • shows minimal response to the story • responds to one element rather than the relationship between characters and events • is unable to explain in English the main idea of the story	The child: • begins to show an understanding by asking questions about the story • begins to answer literal questions about the story • comments on characters and their influence on events, e.g. *He bad. He break house.* • Listens then provides a simple retell	The child: • responds with evaluative comments • begins to ask questions to seek clarification of detail or extra information to assist story comprehension • begins to respond to literal and inferential questions (with prompting and modelling) • listens and retells, providing elaboration on key elements	

Comments

DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

An oral description tells in words how a person, place, object or event looks, behaves or happened. Teachers promote the language of description by focusing children's attention on attributes and defining features, or similarities and differences among items, characters or events.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- use specific vocabulary related to the description, e.g. vocabulary related to an item, character, event?
- use vocabulary related to attributes and function, e.g. size, colour, shape, use?
- include defining features, e.g. *bigger than this one, ... the fastest of the three*?
- incorporate more abstract and varied criteria?
- order and link information to give the description a cohesive, text-like character?

NAME: ______________________

YEAR: ______________________

References

- *Literacy-related Skills*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria, rating scales and checklists to enable focused observation and evaluation of specific literacy-related behaviours.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

  The continuum enables teachers to develop a profile of a child's oral language development over time. Language related to literacy behaviours is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language and Literacy*.

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
The child's description includes simple labelling and commenting.	**The child's description contains highly concrete, visible attributes, e.g. colour, shape or number. Teacher prompting and modelling are required to extend the description.**	**The child's description includes abstract and varied criteria, e.g. location, attributes and functions. With teacher support, vocabulary is specific and appropriate.**	
Indicators of Behaviour			
Text Content and Organisation	**Text Content and Organisation**	**Text Content and Organisation**	
The child: • offers a simple label, e.g. *Dog*. • requires teacher support to provide further information, e.g. Teacher: *What do you do with it?* Child: *Play.* • relates personal experience, e.g. Teacher: *What's this?* Child: *Me got.* • provides some information if questioned	The child: • offers a number of visible attributes, e.g. colour, size, shape, number • needs teacher support to supply more generalised information, e.g. Teacher: *What can your car do?* Child: *It go.* • sometimes ignores important defining features, such as function, e.g. Teacher: *What does a bird do?* Child: *Eat.* • sometimes answers questions with a question, e.g. Teacher: *What can it do?* Child: *Run?*	The child: • uses more abstract and varied criteria, e.g. location, attributes, function • incorporates past experience and makes generalisations, e.g. *I had these before. You can play lots of games with them.* • adds definitions, explanations and elaboration to enhance the description (with teacher support)	

ndicators of Behaviour - DESCRIPTION

he responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore, it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgments bout the child's level of competence.

ocabulary and Sentence Structure	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**COMMENTS**
he child: • uses basic vocabulary, e.g. *big, little, hot* • makes simple statements following teacher questioning, e.g. *red, big* • uses simple connectors if modelled, e.g. *Sunny and hot.*	The child: • uses vocabulary that provides information but little elaboration (following teacher prompting) • describes the object or event in a series of statements, e.g. *Football. Brown. Heavy.* (May require teacher prompting.) • uses simple sentences that provide little elaboration • uses simple connectors, e.g. *and, then, but*	The child: • introduces more varied and specific vocabulary, e.g. *This is my game. It in this box so not get broken. You have to know rules to play.* • links attributes and function in a cohesive text, e.g. describes defining features of a bicycle and adds uses • uses longer and more varied sentences • uses a variety of conjunctions, e.g. so, if, unless	
esponsiveness of Child as Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	
he child: • offers as much information as possible in English, relying on the listener to interpret information, e.g. *You play this.* • needs prompts or questions to elaborate information • responds to questions even with limited information, e.g. Teacher: *Where did you find it?* Child: *Brother. (shows item)* • offers observations rather than linked information, e.g. *I like. Fast.*	The child: • provides simple, predictable information, e.g. size, colour, shape • begins to provide more information when prompted • responds appropriately to questions related to simple attributes. Information may be limited, e.g. *Yes. Big. It long.* • shows some response to audience, e.g. holds up item, makes eye contact (if appropriate)	The child: • modifies or extends information to suit needs of audience, e.g. adds definitions or explanations • responds appropriately to questions, providing some elaboration • responds to audience and situation by using appropriate volume, tone, eye contact etc. • links information to provide simple but logical descriptions, e.g. *It soft. It bounce.*	
esponsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	
he child: • responds to speaker by making comments related to own experience, e.g. Speaker: *This is a photo of Nan's flat.* Listener: *Me house. Him house* • interrupts with personal comments, e.g. Speaker: *This book, my birthday.* Listener: *Me bike Christmas.*	The child: • responds with comments or question, e.g. *Why stars stay sky?* • asks a range of stereotypic questions, e.g. *How big is it? What colour is it?* • relates descriptions to own experiences, e.g. *I got. I have. I got one.*	The child: • makes relevant comments to demonstrate understanding, e.g. *Button on the side of the box. You can push and the ball will roll out.* • initiates questions to clarify or gain information, e.g. *You want me move red car with black wheels or red car with blue wheels?* • relates description to own experiences, e.g. *I sunburn too. You use special cream or skin will sting.*	

omments

PARTNER WORK

NTRODUCTION

artner work makes complex demands on speakers and listeners. It equires children to use language to plan, negotiate roles, monitor the sk and reflect on the outcome of the activity. Language used for ilitating a joint activity thus becomes a tool for social and cognitive evelopment.

itially, bilingual children may focus solely on the completion of the sk. Verbal and social interaction will play an incidental role or will e dominated by non-verbal or egocentric behaviours. To promote a ollaborative approach to learning, teachers need to introduce ctivities that require varying levels of verbal interaction and ooperation.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- undertake the task cooperatively?
- participate equally with partner?
- use talk related to the task?
- negotiate and seek consensus with partner?
- plan and discuss ideas with partner?
- show evidence of monitoring the task, e.g. giving feedback, challenging, explaining, engaging in problem solving?
- offer reflective or evaluative comments, e.g. discussing or comparing similar tasks?

NAME: ____________________________

YEAR: ____________________________

References

- *Language and Thinking*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria, and checklists for observing and evaluating language behaviours.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

  The continuum enables teachers to develop a profile of a child's oral language development over time. Language related to cognitive development is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language and Thinking*.

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
he child needs teacher support to initiate ooperative tasks. Teaching modelling is needed o demonstrate language related to planning and ooperating.	**The child is beginning to develop cooperative behaviours. English language is necessary to complete partner activities. Teacher support and modelling are still required.**	**The child demonstrates appropriate interactive behaviours and uses English when undertaking partner activities.**	
ndicators of Behaviours			
ext Content and Organisation	Text Content and Organisation	Text Content and Organisation	
he child: makes simple comments or gives direct instructions, e.g. *Mine. Me do it. Watch. Look. No* relies on teacher support to interact with partner mimics teacher modelling, e.g. *Wait a minute!* relies on non-verbal behaviours to support English	The child: • makes simple plans with partner, e.g. *We build bridge. Where we start?* • relies on teacher support to negotiate and solve problems, e.g. Child: *Want build tower. He no share.* Teacher: *Have a talk first.* • incorporates language patterns modelled by teacher, e.g. *Let's talk about it first.*	The child: • incorporates joint planning and decision-making, e.g. *We could get .... Why don't we .... Do you know what we have to do?* • uses English to negotiate and clarify roles, e.g. *Which part do you want to make? Who should do this?* • uses English structures modelled by teacher, e.g. *We have to talk first. We have to share.*	
ocabulary and Sentence Construction	Vocabulary and Sentence Construction	Vocabulary and Sentence Construction	
he child: makes general statements and gives simple instructions, e.g. *Circle. Big. Here. No, no... Here.* speaks in short, simple sentences repeats words e.g. *Red, red, red!*	The child: • plans and negotiates using general terms, e.g. *Start here. I go first, OK?* • use simple descriptions when interacting with partner • begins to use phrases e.g. *big circle on the top* • incorporates nouns and verbs associated with the task, e.g. *block, wheel, put, build*	The child: • begins to use a range of vocabulary to plan, negotiate, monitor and reflect on the task, e.g. suggests ideas, gives instructions, challenges partner, evaluates task • uses simple sentences that incorporate vocabulary associated with the task • interacts spontaneously and purposefully, e.g. through evaluative comments	

Indicators of Behaviours - PARTNER WORK

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore, it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgment about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**COMMENTS**
The child: • undertakes the interactive task in parallel with partner (minimum oral communication) • may be silent listening and watching in order to complete task • issues instructions or proceeds without consulting partner in order to participate • begins task without planning in order to participate • may display 'frustrated' behaviours when there is a breakdown in communication with partner • use non-verbal behaviours to support communication • may demonstrate understanding through actions	The child: • uses a variety of verbal and non-verbal language to maintain cooperative behaviours • begins to interact with partner, e.g. *I get some more big one then we push it together.* • may begin to take a more dominant role in the activity, e.g. using less language to make things clear: (points) *Here.* • invites partner to join in the task, e.g. *Your turn* • displays a more active interest in partner's involvement, e.g. *Hey, good!* • begins to monitor the task, e.g. *Now, slow!* • makes simple, reflective comments, e.g. *Too many little blocks. Crash!*	The child: • discusses ideas before beginning activity, e.g. *We could get some .... Why don't we ....* • talks and interacts during the task • takes an equal role in the task, e.g. *We'll have to do this together or it will fall down.* • includes partner in the activity, e.g. *Try this. I help you.* • recognises partner's efforts, e.g. *That good idea. Now should work.* • makes initial plans and discusses ideas • monitors the activity e.g. *You won more than me. Very lucky.* • reflects on task and adds evaluative comments, e.g. *I got more than you* (conscious of who is winning). • may be negative if child is frustrated with activity, e.g. *I don't want to play that game.*	
Responsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	
The child: • makes few responses to acknowledge speaker if absorbed in activity • is unaware of need to respond to speaker during an interaction • may have insufficient understanding of English to respond • may answer question in a way that shows little understanding of the task or question • may try to initiate own interpretation of task	The child: • begins to acknowledge the speaker through joint planning, answering questions, making comments • begins to interact to clarify the task either through an action or verbal comment • elicits responses to questions that demonstrate an understanding of the task • may respond to partner through non-verbal rather than verbal behaviours	The child: • acknowledges the speaker through appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses • interacts throughout the task by commenting, questioning and responding to questions • monitors the speaker's comments or questions and adds appropriate information	

Comments

INQUIRY

NTRODUCTION

Questions serve many purposes, take different forms and elicit esponses of varying complexity. Children ask questions to satisfy uriosity, obtain information, solve problems, clarify information or heck instructions.

Children's questions provide teachers with insights into their thinking. They reveal levels of understanding, highlight gaps in knowledge and ndicate stages of language development.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- understand the terms *question* and *answer*?
- use questions to seek or clarify information?
- generate follow-up questions from information received?
- generate several topic-related questions?
- formulate original, explorative questions?
- use a variety of question forms?
- use appropriate strategies to interact with the listener, e.g. looks at partner, says, *Excuse me*?
- provide feedback if the question is not understood?

NAME: ______________________

YEAR: ______________________

References

- *Language and Thinking*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria, and checklists for observing and evaluating language behaviours.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

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BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
he child asks questions through rising intonation nd tag questions. The child can ask different uestions but not by using conventional forms.	The child, with teacher support, incorporates a limited range of question forms to elicit responses or information.	The child, with teacher support, uses a range of question forms for different purposes and to stimulate responses of varying complexity.	
ndicators of Behaviour			
ext Content and Organisation	**Text Content and Organisation**	**Text Content and Organisation**	
he child: has not developed question words, *when, who, where, what, why*, to gain information relies on teacher support to formulate questions to elicit information, e.g. *Me finish?*	The child: • uses question words, *when, who, where, what, why* to gain and clarify information (with teacher support) • formulates simple questions in informal and formal situations, e.g. during activity time and newstelling sessions (questions may still be statements) • relies on teacher support to formulate questions that will provide extended information, e.g. during class reports or discussions	The child: • generates personally significant topic-related questions to sustain the conversation or discussion • responds to information received by questioning, e.g. during a partner discussion of a maths activity • includes literal questions during planned classroom activities, e.g. when interviewing a storybook character	
ocabulary and Sentence Structure	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	**Vocabulary and Sentence Structure**	
he child: uses a word rather than question format to elicit information, e.g. *Big?* uses questions that are highly-practised or predictable, e.g. *Colour red? Colour blue?* formulates questions about known information, e.g. *It big?* uses some learned question formats for more formal classroom situations, e.g. during newstelling, *Where you get it? You like it?*	The child: • begins to use vocabulary relating to question formats, e.g. *What happened?* • practises question formats in more formal activities, e.g. *How did you make it?* • may have a repertoire of learned and 'safe' questions	The child: • incorporates question formats that elicit literal information, e.g. *How many… How big … What time …?* • develops ability to use a wider range of question formats • uses correct questioning format, e.g. *What time is it?* rather than *What time?* • begins to invert question forms, e.g. *What it is?* becomes *What is it?*	

Indicators of Behaviour - INQUIRY

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore, it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgments about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**COMMENTS**
The child: • makes statements when asked to generate a question • asks questions about established information • needs teacher support to respond to information received, e.g. to generate a follow-up question • asks questions that are 'learned' or highly predictable • asks 'closed' questions that may involve limited use of English, e.g. *What colour is it?* • asks questions using intonation and gesture	The child: • begins to generate simple question formats following modelling, e.g. when, who, where, what, why, how • asks simple questions that relate to information required • needs teacher support and prompting to respond to information received, e.g. to generate a follow-up question • uses a few practised question formats during more formal situations, e.g. class sharing sessions	The child: • uses question formats that elicit literal information in classroom-related activities, e.g. identifying character traits, reporting on science experiments • formulates questions that provide a range of information, e.g. an explanation, a comparison, a justification • uses questions spontaneously in informal situations, e.g. to carry on a conversation, clarify ideas, gain information • formulates both open and closed questions to gain information and extend thinking • needs teacher support to plan and complete more formal activities, e.g. interviewing, simple debates	
Responsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	
The child: • has insufficient knowledge of the topic to respond to the question • has insufficient English to respond to the question • responds with one or two-word answers • uses little verbal or non-verbal interaction beyond the exchange of question and answer • needs teacher support to respond to the question	The child: • has sufficient knowledge of the topic to provide a simple response to the question • provides a simple response to the question • provides feedback if the question is not understood, e.g. shrugs, says, *No* or *Don't know* or looks bewildered • responds to the question and may provide follow-up information if the questioner seeks clarification	The child: • provides information beyond a simple response, if required, e.g. limited information for a closed question and extended information for an open question • interacts with questioner until sufficient information is provided • interacts spontaneously in informal situations • begins to monitor more formal activities, e.g. anticipates types of questions that will be asked during an interview	

Comments

CLASSIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

Classification plays an integral part in developing children's knowledge. As children begin to explore and interpret experiences they label objects, people and events. They also talk about the features of objects and make mental comparisons between past and new experiences. As networks of knowledge grow, more extensive and sophisticated language is used as a tool for organising what the child knows and understands.

Older bilingual learners may have a conceptual understanding of classification but may not be able to express this in English in the early stages of development. Tasks should reflect children's cognitive level of understanding.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- understand the classification task, e.g. can identify or sort items on the basis of features such as attributes or functions?
- use appropriate naming and descriptive vocabulary when sorting or classifying?
- go beyond obvious perceptual features such as colour and size?
- logically substantiate classification choice, e.g. *I put these together because they live in the water?*
- use the language of comparison, e.g. *more than, bigger than, the same as, not as, the (...)est one?*
- follow through classification in a systematic way, e.g. attributes, functions, habits, location, usefulness?

NAME: ____________________

YEAR: ____________________

References

- *Language and Thinking*

  The module includes 'Spot Check' criteria, and checklists for observing and evaluating language behaviours.

- *Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

  The continuum enables teachers to develop a profile of a child's oral language development over time. Language related to cognitive development is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language and Thinking*.

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
The child makes arbitrary selections when grouping. No consistent classification strategies are evident. Teacher prompting and modelling are essential. Little language is generated during the task.	**The child uses an exploratory approach to the task. Items are sorted using simple criteria which may change during the activity, e.g. function, attributes. Teacher support is required.**	**The child's sorting skills are more consistent and show evidence of self-monitoring. Subgroups are described and items are sorted using consistent criteria.**	
Indicators of Behaviour			
Text Content and Organisation	**Text Content and Organisation**	**Text Content and Organisation**	
The child: • initiates little information but will complete task at own level • needs teacher support to label or describe items • is able to group items but does not use English to describe attributes	The child: • includes labels and some descriptions, e.g. *Truck. Big wheel.* • links items that may or may not have an apparent link to the classification, e.g. *The ice-cream go with fruit. You eat.*	The child: • initiates language to show classification decisions, e.g. *These big. These all very small.* • labels and describes items • shows logical links between items and classification decisions, e.g. *The caravan here this one.*	
Vocabulary and Sentence Construction	**Vocabulary and Sentence Construction**	**Vocabulary and Sentence Construction**	
The child: • uses general labels, e.g. *dog, apple* • makes apparently unrelated links between items, e.g. *Hat basket* • makes simple statements, e.g. *Heather. Dress here.* • may find the grouping decisions he or she has made difficult to explain	The child: • uses more detailed labelling, e.g. parts of vehicles or plants, leaves, stem • uses simple, descriptive language, e.g. shape, colour, size • uses vocabulary and sentence construction that link an attribute and function, e.g. *Got wheels, motor, you drive it. They got wheels and you drive in them.*	The child: • introduces terminology to assist more complex classification, e.g. *These numbers even.* • extends descriptions to include a range of words for each item, e.g. *large, heavy, rectangle* • includes definitions and generalisations and some subject-specific vocabulary e.g. *Animals warm-blooded*	

Indicators of Behaviour - CLASSIFICATION

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore, it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgment about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**Responsiveness of Child as Speaker**	**COMMENTS**
The child: • relies on teacher prompting and questioning to classify items, e.g. *Can you find the things that belong together? Can you put each group in its special box?* • completes classification tasks with minimal talking or interaction • relies on teacher prompts to describe or explain how items have been sorted • focuses on labelling items rather than describing the relationship between the items, e.g. *Horse. Cow, Animal.*	The child: • begins to incorporate talking and interaction to complete classification activities • begins to incorporate descriptions of items when classifying groups, e.g. *corners, flat, shells, smooth, rough* • describes simple relationship between items after modelling, e.g. *They can swim. We can't swim.* *A fish can swim. A truck can't swim.* *They swim in water. Sea creatures.* • needs teacher support and questioning to describe features of items and reasons for classifications	The child: • incorporates descriptive language while completing classification tasks • elaborates on, or justifies, groupings • effectively describes attributes and functions of items • attempts to make generalisations based on less obvious characteristics, e.g. *Bird fly. Emu not fly. Where put?* • offers evidence to substantiate classification, e.g. *Breathe under water. The one. And this one.*	
Responsiveness of Child as Listener	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	**Responsiveness of Child as Listener**	
The child: • shows minimal response to the task, e.g. the purpose of the activity may be unclear or the English instructions may be too complex • responds to literal questions with one-word answers, e.g. *Red. Long. Black.* • asks questions to complete grouping activities which may appear to be unrelated but enable the learner to join in	The child: • requires teacher support to respond to the demands of task or sophistication of language • responds to comments made, e.g. *Big? Here?* • responds to questions with more detail, e.g. incomplte sentences and phrases incorporating descriptive language • asks questions to clarify grouping activities, e.g. *Here? Like that?*	The child: • responds with evaluative comments, e.g. *This one here. This one better!* • answers questions about concrete or abstract groupings • asks questions to clarify information provided	

Comments

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